Academy of Democratic Modernity

Opportunities and dangers of the Third World War

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Part 1: The intra-system conflicts of state powers

Imagine it is war - and one of the warring parties does not notice. The Third World War has been raging since the collapse of the Soviet Union over 30 years ago. Each part of the world is affected. Every human being is confronted with the consequences of this war, and all the power centres of capitalist modernity have mobilised their full strength for this conflict. Only the democratic forces - popular movements, anti-system forces[1] , trade unions, parties, social organisations, institutions, associations, artists, intellectuals, etc. recognise the situation. They do so reluctantly and hesitantly. It is due to the enormous military escalation over the course of the war in Ukraine that a spade is now called a spade. The Third World War is shaping our world today. There are challenges to understanding political developments and finding an effective response as democratic forces in local regions, countries, continents and across the world. In the following, we attempt to present the basic motivations and conflicts of the forces of capitalist modernity in the Third World War and define it's specific characteristics and distinction from the previous world wars. We will also show ways for the democratic forces of the world to utilise their inevitable participation in this war to build an alternative to capitalist modernity and to solve the enormous social problems of the 21st century. As long as the majority of democratic forces continue to ignore the reality that they, too, are an actor in the Third World War, victory will be recklessly hand over to the powers of capitalist modernity, consequently allowing the destruction of the foundations of human life.

The war in Ukraine leads to an admission

"It is a kind of third world war that is being waged piecemeal." (2) These words were spoken by Pope Francis in June 2015 with regard to the developments in the Middle East at the time, but also in Ukraine. While the German Chancellor stated, *"I am doing everything to prevent an escalation leading to a third world war"*, (3) and US President Biden said *"We will not fight the third world war in Ukraine"*, (4) they continue to portray World War III as a future scenario. Yet the Pope, this summer, sharpened his assessment: *"For me, today, World War III has broken out."* (5)

1 *In Sociology of Freedom*, Abdullah Öcalan evaluates five movements that he sees as anti-system forces: The Legacy of Real Socialism; Reevaluating Anarchism; Feminism: Rebellion of the Oldest Colony; Ecology: The Rebellion of the Environment; Cultural Movements: Tradition's Revenge on the Nation-State. (1)

In the media the issue continues to be discussed internationally, primarily due to one of the possible outcomes of war in Ukraine that has not occurred yet. This is only more devastating. It is striking that the use of nuclear weapons is repeatedly used as a criterion for determining the outbreak of the most comprehensive form of war. Since this has not been the case yet in Ukraine, according to most international media it is still not possible to speak of a world war. The two world wars of the last century serve as a frame of reference for the admittedly difficult determination of whether or not the world is already in a third world war: sustained physical battles that last for years, the mobilisation of millions of soldiers, relatively clear front lines, more or less stable alliances, images of mass destruction and - as already mentioned - the use of nuclear weapons. Significant democratic forces in various parts of the world have recognised the existence of the Third World War for many years and are thus in a position to successfully pursue democratic politics for their respective societies. This is true for the Zapatista movement in Mexico (6) as well as for the PKK in Kurdistan and the Middle East (7). They are already a significant step further than the majority of democratic forces in various parts of the world, which either retreat from this crucial political conclusion, or are not capable of analysing and articulating it. We will show that a world war has been observed in practice for a long time. Unfortunately, these forces frequently continue to close their eyes, yet their democratic praxis is increasingly demanded in the interest of the workers, women, youth and all societies and oppressed peoples of the world.

The conflict of nation states over the multipolar world order

One of the main conflicts in the context of the Third World War is that the most powerful nation-states, or alliances of several of them such as the EU, are competing with each other for the most advantageous position of power within the increasingly emergent multipolar world order. In this process we can observe how the USA, the EU, Britain, Russia and China in particular - but also other nation-state actors such as India and Japan - use a broad range of economic, media, military, biological and political means against each other. The 20th century has been characterised by bipolar power relations since the end of the Second World War. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the USA was allowed to rejoice briefly and ecstatically in its position as the 'first and last global superpower'. To put it in the now arrogant words of the American geostrategist George Friedman, "The United States is economically, militarily and politically the most powerful country in the world and there is no real challenger to this power.

[...] The inherent power of the United States combined with its geographic location makes it the central player of the 21st century." (8) But it quickly became apparent that the US, as the sole leading power of capitalist modernity, could not cope with the enormous problems perpetuated by its own system. Today, the increasing loss of prestige and power of the USA has reached the point where the powers mentioned above are openly challenging the USA's claim to sole leadership, and are actively competing for their respective positions in the multipolar world order. Riza Altun, a leading member of the PKK, describes the dynamic as follows: *"The system is searching for ways out of the crisis. Each imperialist country designs and pursues its own plans to overcome it. In doing so, they are embroiled in internal contradictions and struggles. At the same time, they are competing on a global scale, creating worldwide chaos."* (9) In this process, each of the powers of capitalist modernity pursues its own strategy, resulting from both its specific geostrategic position and political, economic, military and social conditions. Let us take a brief look at the strategic orientation of the four most powerful nation-state competitors in the Third World War.

The Three-NATO Formula

The USA has long resisted relinquishing its claim to autocracy and leadership of capitalist modernity. But even its numerous military interventions since 11th September 2001 - especially in the Middle East - have not prevented it from being increasingly seen as an unstable and teetering giant. No one can deny that the country still has enormous power militarily, economically and politically, and is prepared to use it worldwide to assert its own interests. At the same time, and especially since the Biden administration came to power, we can see that the USA is relying more and more on the NATO alliance to be able to hold its own in the Third World War. At the beginning of Biden's term in office, what was still ambiguously called an 'alliance of the democracies of the world' has become a hard-line activation and disciplining of the NATO member states under Anglo-Saxon leadership (USA, UK) since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. The USA is pursuing a strategy of involving Russia and China in protracted wars on their own doorstep and thus weakening them - in Ukraine, Georgia or Taiwan - and at the same time involving the EU more militarily while making the individual EU countries economically dependent on US energy supplies and keeping them politically disunited. The comprehensive approach that the US is pursuing globally was recently summed up by PKK Executive Council member Duran Kalkan: *"In order to prolong the*

life of the system and its own leadership position, it is said in some circles that the US is applying a 'three-NATO formula'. The first of these is 'European NATO'. It is obvious that the fight of this NATO is against Russia. The second is the 'Pacific NATO' directed against China. In September 2021, the United States formed the AUKUS[2] with Australia and the United Kingdom. The third is the 'Middle East NATO' against Iran. Israel and some Arab states form the core of this alliance. There is even talk of the Turkish Republic being given a place in this organisation." (11) The USA hopes to maintain its sole leadership role in capitalist modernity through new blocs and NATO-style alliances that it uncompromisingly dominates. Alternatively, in what it sees as the worst case scenario, it hopes to occupy the most advantageous position in a multipolar world order. In order to do so the US is prepared to plunge large parts of the world, including Europe, into profound and long-lasting chaos. The result of this policy is described by the Kurdish pioneering thinker and co-founder of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, as an "empire of chaos, which we could also, in a certain sense, call World War III" (12).

Russia seeks its role in capitalist modernity

With the war in Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated its determination to secure the most advantageous position possible in the multipolar world order with the help of massive military force. Since Putin took office in 1999, the Russian state has pursued goals of strengthening its internal cohesion and (re)gaining regional influence, especially in the Middle East, Europe, North Africa and Central Asia. It has economically integrated into capitalist modernity through the sale of its natural resources, and aimed towards diplomatic recognition as an equal actor. The Russian state hopes to be granted its desired place in the multipolar world order in the medium term with the help of various offensives. For example, the diplomatic assault of Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, the economic offensive of the commissioning of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline at the end of 2011, and the currently ongoing military attack in Ukraine. Large parts of the Russian elite under Putin's leadership rely on a Eurasian strategy; i.e. the strengthening of continental relations in order to break the USA's global claim to sole leadership. Russia wants to strengthen its position of pow-

2 AUKUS (acronym of Australia, United Kingdom and United States) is a trilateral military alliance concluded in mid-September 2021 between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The object of the agreement is the support of Australia by the USA and UK in the development and deployment of nuclear submarines. In addition, knowledge is to be exchanged on artificial intelligence, quantum technology and cyber issues, among others. (10)

er through close relations with China in the Far East and with Turkey and Iran in the Middle East. At the same time, it seeks to weaken the EU as a competitor in politics of power by supporting nationalist forces and cultivating close economic relations with specific countries, especially Germany. Darya Platonova was the daughter of the Russian state ideologist Alexander Dugin. She, too, was a sought-after political strategist in Russia until her murder in August of this year. In an interview in May 2022, Darya Platonova indirectly outlined the geographically comprehensive strategy Russia is pursuing in the conflict of the multipolar world order: *"My interest is both in the space of European civilisation and in the Middle East, where a kind of conservative revolution is taking place - from Iran's constant confrontation with American hegemony, to Syria's struggle against Western imperialism, to Turkey, which is now showing interesting tendencies to break away from NATO and the Anglo-Saxon geopolitical bloc, and is trying to build its foreign policy on a multipolar basis in dialogue with Eurasian civilisation. I think it is important to follow the processes in the Middle East, as this is one of the stages in the struggle against imperialism. On the other hand, I am also very interested in African countries; they represent for Europe and Russia the "other" from whose analysis we can better understand their civilisation."* (13) However, it must be emphasised that Russia is not seeking an alternative to the current system, but rather a prominent role in capitalist modernity. In the words of Abdullah Öcalan: *"The capitalist system of the American continental culture has shown an ability to expand into all cultures; from the Pacific and Australia to India, China, and Japan and from Africa to Russia and South Siberia. In a certain sense, it has won the war of cultures and civilizations."* (14) However, the extent to which Russia will succeed with its policy is questionable - not only due to the military difficulties of the Russian army in the Ukraine war. PKK representative Riza Altun pointed out Russia's fundamental problem in 2018: *"Russia is trying to find a way out of the crisis with the help of outdated concepts such as nation-statehood and centralism. However, Russia will by no means succeed on this path. [...] These powers are trying to find a place in the new system on the basis of 100 to 200-year-old capitalist methods. But this approach will certainly not lead to any solution. Rather, it will deepen the existing crisis and chaos. This is exactly what we can already observe. Because these two powers [Russia and China, author's note] became part of the global system only later, they do not have extensive experience with capitalism. Therefore, they represent a backward-looking capitalist mentality. Russian policy aims at imposing its own political-military hegemony on others. [...] All these are things that belong to the past of capitalism. Building global hegemony on the basis*

of these approaches will not be possible." (15) Despite this statement, we can assume that in the foreseeable future the Russian state will continue to use all its economic, military and political power to assert itself in the conflicts that accompany the emergence of the multipolar world order.

European strategic autonomy

Europe is the historical birthplace of capitalist modernity, evident in the developments in London and Amsterdam from the 16th century onwards. Today, the EU and its most powerful member states have to admit to themselves that there is a large gap between their self proclamation of strength and their ability to act in the ongoing Third World War. For years, leading EU representatives have been talking about 'European strategic autonomy' (16) and prophesying that the EU will assert its own interests globally with 'the language of power'. (17) The member states of the EU, in particular Germany and France, are striving to for an advantageous position in the emerging multipolar world order through a politically, economically and militarily united union. Membership is growing through admission of new members from the Balkans to the Caucasus. The vision is an EU that is no longer militarily dependent on the USA. It is economically dominant and politically united, securing power and profits for its members that they could never achieve globally on their own. Since the early 2000s, many EU countries led by Germany and France have pursued a policy of close economic relations with the other two major Eurasian powers, Russia and China. However, in the wake of the Ukraine war, the EU is forced to admit that it still does not have adequate autonomy and power of its own to pursue a self sufficient policy that does not rely on aligning with either party of the conflict, the USA or Russia and China. Consequently, the EU countries - including Germany and France, who claim a leading role in capitalist modernity - are forced to severely restrict their relations with Russia and to initiate something similar with China. For the time being, they must meekly accept their military and economic dependence on the Anglo-Saxon world. Riza Altun finds the following description for this contradictory situation: *"The European countries are pursuing a policy in which, on the one hand, they take their place within the global hegemony project designed by the USA, but on the other hand, they separate themselves from it and demand their share in the global system. While two of the global powers, the USA and Russia, are in an intense confrontation with each other, the USA is trying to establish a common front against Russia within the framework of an alliance with its European partners. At the same time, there are European countries that do not want to give up their relations with*

Russia. While the USA is developing a new policy towards Iran[3] in order to assert its own hegemony in the Middle East, Germany, France and Great Britain are reacting reservedly and trying to stay out of this conflict as much as possible." (19) Since September last year the German state has been strategically persevering with it's own development while enjoying the security of NATO, the transatlantic alliance. The German state aims to develop both itself and the EU economically and militarily, so that from 2030 onwards both will have the power to aggressively compete within the multipolar world order. The fact that this is already leading to destabilisation of Europe and Asia has been particularly unmistakable since the start of the Ukraine war. It is questionable whether the EU will be able to overcome its current political instability, economic weakness, and military dependence in order to confront the both the USA, as well as China and Russia, on equal footing in the long term.

China's new self-confidence

As the fourth decisive actor in the multipolar world order, China is pursuing a policy of smoothing out or suppressing internal contradictions, expanding its own military strength and using its already extensive economic apparatus to implement its global claim to power. The Chinese 'policy of intensified exploitation and the nation-state paradigm' (20) promises nation-state centralisation in the service of increasing profits. This happens alongside the suppression of social resistance through extensive use of cutting edge biotechnology and information technology. By intensifying its economic relations of development and dependence with countries in Africa, the Middle East, South America, Southeast Europe and Central Asia, China is attempting to strengthen its own position in the multipolar world order and present itself in capitalist modernity as a reliable leader. With China's direction, parts of the world that are currently less incorporated into the capitalist and imperialist system can be integrated even more profitably into the capitalist process of exploitation.

Despite the opposition of the USA and its NATO allies, China has already overtaken these traditional powers of capitalist modernity in many countries in Africa and South America, rising as the largest trading partner in those geographies. With the help of projects such as the 'New Silk Road' and alliances of states such as the 'Shanghai Cooperation Organisation'[4]

3 See e.g. the 'Abraham Accords Declaration' between the USA, Israel, the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan (18).

4 Member states of the SCO are Russia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Iran.

(SCO), China is offering - under it's leadership - the opportunity to participate in technological exchange, dollar-free trade and political forums away from the West to interested parties. The new admission of Iran as a full SCO member in September this year and the new status for Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar as SCO dialogue partners show that it is increasingly popular. The Chinese state is assuming with increasing self-confidence that the USA is no longer capable of living up to its claim of sole leadership in capitalist modernity. China is openly using its economic power worldwide to assert its own interests and is also arming itself militarily to secure its influence in Asia and, in the form of its first military base abroad in the Horn of Africa, to make its influence felt along global trade routes further away. This policy may enable China to assume a prominent role in the multipolar world order. However, considering the policy previously described, the country's contribution to overcoming the crises of the system will be insubstantial.

The Struggle between Nationalist and Globalist Forces[5] over the Future of Capitalist Modernity

The second central conflict being fought out in the course of the Third World War is between the powers of capitalist modernity. It is between the globalist forces of capitalism* on the one hand and nation-state forces on the other. It is about whether and how the system of capitalist modernity should be renewed. Broadly speaking, the desire to maintain the status quo of the nation-state is in competition with a globalist revision of the existing system. While parts of the democratic forces have been talking about this conflict for many years, representatives of capitalist modernity are also increasingly naming this problem. For example, the previously mentioned Russian geostrategist Darya Platonova said in May 2022 that the war in Ukraine was *"indeed an example of a clash of civilisations; it can be seen as a clash between the globalist and Eurasian civilisations"* and stated that there is a *"globalist and pro-American agenda"*. (21) But as a staunch advocate of nationalist status quo thinking, she came to an unequivocal verdict: *"The agony of a globalist regime in danger of losing ground to multipolarism."* (22)

5 "Globalist" is often used as a far-right term. In this piece, "globalist forces" is used by the author to reference actors who are comprised of multi-national corporations, investment funds, offshore financial centres, private militaries, and so on. The term here describes a non-nationalist or non-dualistic power axis (e.g. instead of a conflict positioned solely between nations or between East and West, there are alliances within the capitalist class across the world).

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Status quo - nation states as modern governorates

The inherent structure of the nation state system and the power struggle between them cannot solve the serious social, economic, ecological and political problems caused by capitalist modernity. The main actors and profiteers of the system are also aware of this. Since the 1970s they have been engaged in an intensive search for possibilities of renewal. The following description by Abdullah Öcalan, which applies to today's Middle East, aptly describes the starting point of this search: *"The nation-state system of organisation of the last century is not sufficient to save capitalist modernity. It has become clear that the minimalist nation-state in the Middle East is an instrument of domination for capitalist modernity. Today's nation-states have the same importance in the region as the Roman Empire's governorships once had. Their role is perhaps even more collaborative than that of the Roman governorates; they are far removed from the cultural traditions of the region, and when they try to move closer to them, they find themselves in a contradictory position. The elements of excessive profit and industrialisation of capitalist modernity are far from adding depth to the culture of the Middle East. Even the most widespread nation-state instruments are experiencing rapid erosion, as they are all over the world. They are not even sufficient to deal with the deepening crisis. Their very existence is exacerbating the crisis"*. (23) In order to understand the Third World War and its objectives, strategies and dynamics, it is therefore crucial to recognise the ways in which nation-state status-quo forces and globalist actors are conducting their conflicts with each other.

Globalist megapolitics - unmasking all masked deities

For some time, globalist forces have been trying to organisationally and paradigmatically transform capitalist modernity - including its three pillars of capitalism, nation-state, and industrialism - in order to overcome the crisis that has been deepening for decades. Although we should not understand the globalist bloc as a homogeneous group of actors, its politics are nevertheless characterised by certain strategic foundations. According to Riza Altun, these policies are shaped by the following objectives: *"Softening the nation-state system, removing tariffs, weakening nationalism - all of these touch the foundations of capitalism. The nation state, tariffs and borders are fundamental tools of capitalism."* (24) Since 1997 the Zapatista movement's political analyses spoke about the aspirations of the forces of globalisation within capitalist modernity in the wake of the Third World War: *"The abolition of trade borders, the universality of telecommunica-*

tions, the information superhighways, the omnipresent power of the financial markets, the international free trade agreements. The whole process of globalisation, along with the destruction of nation states, leads to the pulverisation of internal markets. Paradoxically, globalisation produces a fragmented world, made up of isolated (or mutually exclusive) parts; a world of compartmentalised pieces, connected only by fragile economic bridges; a world of broken mirrors reflecting the useless global unity of the neoliberal puzzle. But neoliberalism not only fragments the world it claims to unite, it also provides the political-economic centre from which this war is directed. This brings us to mega-politics. It globalises national policies, subjects them to a leadership that designs global strategies in pursuit of market interests. In the name of this logic, decisions are made about wars, about loans, the buying and selling of goods, about the establishment of diplomatic relations, trade blockades, about political aid programmes, migration laws, coups, repressive measures, elections, about international mergers, international frictions, investments. In short, about the fate of entire nations." (25) On this basis, the Zapatistas came to a clear conclusion 25 years ago: *"For mega-politics, national politics are a matter of dwarfs who have to fit in."* (26) How comprehensive the strategy of the globalist forces is can also be seen in certain literary works that have appeared in recent years.

The Israeli intellectual Yuval Noah Harari stands out as an example of this mindset; his trilogy Homo Sapiens, Homo Deus and 21 Lessons for the 21st Century read like a globalist manifesto for the renewal of capitalist modernity. Harari declares the nation-state, liberalism and humanism to be outdated and argues for their overcoming with the help of biotechnological and information-technological solutions to remedy all of humanity's problems. Harari does not outline a comprehensive alternative but proposes the establishment of a globally organised system based on rapidly advancing technological and scientific developments. According to him, this would put an end to concepts such as nation-state borders, liberal values and even man himself, who would be replaced in the long term by robots and artificial intelligence. Despite dystopic visions, Harari represents the globalist mindset with great conviction and linguistic fluency.

Abdullah Öcalan, who considers neither the policies of the nation-state nor those of the globalist actors to be correct, repeatedly expresses sharp criticism of the globalists' programme in his defence writings. *"The nation-state, which began to dissolve at the height of its development in the 1970s, was an expression of this reality. As the strongest pillar of capitalist*

modernity disintegrated, the disintegration of the system was also inevitable. The monetary divinity of the financial capitalist age (from the 1970s onwards), into which it had most recently taken refuge, meant a further acceleration of the disintegration. When capitalist modernity was exposed as the god of war, it showed what a vile enemy of nature and humanity this deity is as the god of money. It has proved to be a tangible power that has used virtual methods to carry out robberies, social collapse and the destruction of the natural environment on an unprecedented scale. Its transformation into a virtual power should be interpreted as a simple summary of the history of civilisation. It is the unmasking of all masked deities, the unveiling of their true character." (27) The driving force behind globalist aspirations is the finance-capitalist faction of capitalist modernity. It has enormous financial resources and is highly capable of enacting it's vision through funds, banks, globally operating companies, international media houses and globally retrievable culture-industrial companies. Massive intervention is already taking place in the cultural-social mosaic of humanity to enforce the renewal of capitalist modernity. The aim of these efforts is to impose a worldwide culturally uprooted and accordingly homogenous, politically incapacitated, morally broken type of personality, alienated from nature and entrapped in virtual patterns of life. Elements of this renewal of capitalist modernity meet resistance from the actors who would lose power and profit by shifting away from the current system.

National pride vs. rules of the new globalism

The nation-state was one of the most important means by which capitalists, living for millennia as a marginal group on the fringes of society, succeeded in making their culture the dominant system of rule. The nation-state utilises an enormous, centralised, geographically extensive form of organisation, reaching into all areas of social life. This provided capitalist modernity with the necessary means of power to assert itself against both the old feudal elites and the social upheavals of the democratic forces. Without the nation state, capitalism may never have developed into the dominant modernity. Since the 1970s, nation-state actors have been fiercely resisting the intentions of the globalist camp of capitalist modernity described above. In the words of Riza Altun, *"The powers which stand for the status quo and nation-state approach do not accept change. In the Middle East, for example, these are states like Iran, Turkey, Syria and Iraq. In Latin America, it is again the nation states there. It is the states that produce the status quo and do not want to deviate from it. They are not particularly open to even minor reforms."* (28) The resistance of the nation

states represents a kind of struggle for survival of capitalist modernity as we know it. For if they were indeed to be overcome, the ruling system would face the challenge of developing a largely new modernity. Abdullah Öcalan also dealt with this intra-systemic (inner-systemic) conflict of capitalist modernity in his book Beyond State, Power, and Violence, published originally in 2004: *"The system's forces and its vassals are uncomfortable with the wave of globalization engulfing the world under US leadership. The European republics and democracies in particular are reacting more vigorously every day. They are trying to prevent the EU - as the nation-state and the über-nation - from being squashed. Under the shield of the EU, an attempt is being made to create a human rights and democratic bourgeois alternative. One key policy being pursued is balancing the US. Similar efforts are also being made by Russia, China, Japan, and Brazil. In general, the nation-state is the institution that faces the most difficulty in the face of the US's imperial proclivities. The efforts of small and medium-size states - which actually should have become provincial states long ago - are to some degree swimming against the tide. It is reasonable to think that eventually they will openly admit their dependency, give up their national pride, and adapt to the rules of this new globalization. They have no other choice."* (29)

Practically every country today is marked by the contradiction between nation-state and globalist forces: Trump vs. Biden, AfD vs. Greens, Le Pen vs. Macron, Labour vs. Tories or Putin vs. Khodorkovsky. Although this juxtaposition may seem somewhat simplistic, it is possible to see in the everyday political struggles of many countries how individuals, parties, foundations or media are used by globalist (mainly finance capital) and nation-state (mainly industrial capital) forces to organise and play out their profound contradictions regarding the future of capitalist modernity. The fact that nation states are more insistent on preserving the status quo does not make them inflexible and rigidly conservative actors. They are certainly taking advantage of the historical chaos phase to shift borders, forge new international alliances and reform their own ways of organising. The factions of national capital and bureaucracies organised in the respective nation-states hold on to the triad of capitalism, nation-state and industrialism. Under massive pressure from above by the globalist forces of capitalist modernity and from below by the democratic awakenings of workers, women, youth, societies and oppressed peoples, the nation-state actors are forced to make concessions time and again. We can understand the softening of customs borders through free trade agreements, global military alliances, international political forums or participa-

tion in globally operating institutions as a consequence of this pressure. At the same time, the nation-state camp tries to preserve its own power and profit opportunities. However, ideological and democratic leaders like Abdullah Öcalan see this mixture of defending the status quo and making concessions in line with the system as an unpromising endeavour: *"Since the 1990s, globalization and the US Empire have been seeking a balance within this framework. The "systemic chaos" that capitalism is undergoing shows that the crisis cannot be overcome as it was in the past. As a result, the globalization of our time will be ridden with crises. Although the factors that intensify the crisis are inherited from the past, they tend to increase in severity. All countermeasures notwithstanding, the falling rate of profit, the increasing cost due to environmental pollution and taxes, expenses rising from the welfare state practices, and the increasing democratic opposition diminish the capital accumulation rate of the system. The distinction between the internal and the external is further reduced. Globalization forces everyone to behave almost as if they were a single state. In this phase, new arrangements between the system and its allies are inevitable. The nation-state, which at the emergence and during the maturity of capitalism had shown limited independence, is now an obstacle. Neither the tendency toward becoming the greatest power nor the economic character of globalization can endure the old nationalism and the nation-state."* (30)

The methodological particularities of the Third World War

The Third World War differs fundamentally from the two world wars of the first half of the 20th century. Its temporal, geographical and methodological configuration at first glance seems like many small, independent centres of conflict, characterised by constant fluctuations inintensity. In his fifth defence treatise, Abdullah Öcalan deals in detail with the peculiarities of the Third World War: *"It is already clear today that the 'Third World War' will be fragmented, protracted and fought with the help of a wide variety of technologies due to the existence of nuclear weapons"*. (31) Anyone who has followed global developments since the collapse of the Soviet Union closely will quickly recognise the patterns described by Öcalan and be able to combine them into a holistic picture.

At this point, let us briefly consider the most important characteristics of World War 3:
1) Protracted, low-intensity warfare: countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and now also Ukraine have been shaken by wars for several decades, in the course of which both the state structures

and the social fabric of the respective countries are comprehensively destroyed. State-of-the-art war technology, extensive intelligence resources, private mercenary armies, militias of a religious or fascist nature and, if necessary, the temporary deployment of large contingents of conventional troops characterise this type of warfare. This conscious strategy of state actors can be seen, for example, in the military concept 'Resistance Operating Concept - ROC' (32), which was developed by the US Air Force and the military special forces of Sweden.

2) Economic wars: With the help of tariffs, import bans or even comprehensive sanctions regimes, the various warring parties try to bring each other to their knees. The aim is long term attrition. In times of a multipolar world order, however, affected states quickly look for alternative trading partners and sales markets.

3) Flexible alliances: In the Third World War, there are no rigid fronts, neither militarily, economically nor politically. Countries like the USA and Russia can fight each other in Ukraine and at the same time jointly coordinate their military activities in Syria through firmly established mechanisms. A similar principle also applies in terms of time: NATO countries were able to liberate Mosul from ISIS side by side with Iranian forces in 2017, only to have the nuclear agreement fail shortly afterwards and then to seek open confrontation with each other.

4) Media as an ideological weapon: Alongside military, political and economic means, the media is one of the most important weapons in the Third World War, with which an intense ideological battle for truth is fought. They are deliberately used by states to legitimise their own war policies and to present them as successful, while the opposing side is branded as autocratic, weak and ruthless. At the same time, with the help of their media, individual states try to enthuse their own population for war and increase their willingness to accept hardships in the form of inflation, unemployment, the dismantling of relative democracy, and austerity policies. At the same time, globally operating media monopolies such as Netflix, Facebook and Co. ensure an increasing homogenisation of cultural habits and interests.

5) Biological warfare: Chemical weapons and tactical nuclear weapons are already an integral part of the Third World War. The war in Syria, which has been ongoing for more than ten years, and Turkey's war of occupation in Southern Kurdistan/Northern Iraq clearly show this. In the case of Ukraine, too, there are now open warnings of the use of tactical nuclear weapons. All this shows that for the states of this world, the inhibition threshold for the use of the most devastating weapon has massively decreased. In addition, epidemics like Covid19 are exploited to weaken

social cohesion to the brink of total collapse through fear, insecurity and mistrust. The result is technologically monitored, socially isolated and easily controllable human masses, who visibly find it difficult to resist the war policies of their respective states. Worldwide pandemics also give opportunities for global institutions like the WHO (World Health Organization) or monopoly corporations like Amazon to increase their influence in all parts of the world, thus calling into question the meaningfulness of domestic narratives in national contexts.

Serbia of the First World War - Kurdistan of the Third World War

Abdullah Öcalan highlights the following methodological and geographical particularities of the Third World War: *"The `Third World War' is a reality and its focus is geographically and culturally in the Middle East. The events in Iraq alone, as the focus of the 'Third World War', make it clear that this war is not about a country but about the interests and existence of the world hegemonic powers. This war can only be ended if Iran is completely neutralised, Afghanistan and Iraq are stabilised, and China and Latin America are eliminated as a threat. [...] Sometimes diplomacy will be intensified, sometimes violence. The agenda will always be intervened with the help of severe and controlled economic crises. The prioritisation of geographical areas will change continuously, but in one way or another the war will be waged in a holistic manner in many areas simultaneously."* (33)

Regarding the centre of the war, Öcalan is much more specific elsewhere: *"The heart of the region and even the whole world in terms of the 'Third World War' beats on this line with an accelerated rhythm. The heart of revolution and counter-revolution, which once beat on the Amsterdam-London-Paris, Petersburg-Moscow line, now beats on the Diyarbakır-Erbil-Baghdad line."* (34) This observation leads Öcalan to conclude that Kurdistan is the centre of this global conflict: *"Without exaggerating, I can say that the plot [illegal abduction of Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya on 15. February 1999 and his detention on the Turkish prison island of İmralı, which continues to this day, author's note] against me is shaped by objectives that play a much greater role than the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince by a Serbian nationalist in the run-up to the First World War. It may seem an exaggeration to call the invasion of the Middle East by the US and its allies, undertaken in the context of this plot, a 'Third World War'. However, in terms of the developments to which it led and its results, this invasion can easily be described as one of the most intense and pur-*

poseful phases of the `Third World War'. If we evaluate the plot against me in this context, we can see its true significance. As a counterpart to the Serbia of the First World War, we can speak of the Kurdistan of the Third World War. From a geopolitical and geostrategic point of view, Kurdistan is the central area for the start, continuation and conclusion of the 'Third World War' emanating from the Middle East. Napoleon's mention of the strategic importance of Kurdistan and Armenia for his invasion of Egypt in 1798 shows that there was a very early awareness of this fact. We also know that one of the first moves of the British Empire to occupy the region after Napoleon was through Sulaymaniyah in Southern Kurdistan in the early 19th century." (35)

Against the background of this observation, it is easier to understand why Kurdistan today is one of the central sources of inspiration for the democratic forces of the world. In particular, the revolution in Rojava, the paradigm of Democratic Modernity and the practical development of modern guerrilla warfare by the People's Defence Forces HPG (Hêzên Parastina Gel) and Unity of Free Women - YJA-Star (Yekîtiya Jinên Azad). The region is simultaneously suffering continuous attacks by Turkish state forces, various Islamist forces including the Islamic State (Daesh), and the involvement of NATO.

Uncertain outcome - opportunity for an alternative paradigm

Against the background of this admittedly only keyword-like description of the most important features of the Third World War, we can see that we are dealing with dramatic and dangerous developments with uncertain outcomes. This concerns both the question of which nation-state forces will prevail in the struggle for the foremost places in the multipolar world order, to what extent the globalist forces will be able to assert their ideas of a renewal of capitalist modernity, and whether the democratic forces of the world will be able to put their ideas of democracy, freedom and equality into practice in the form of an alternative paradigm and political system.

War of the systemic forces or solution of social problems

As unclear as the outcome of the Third World War still seems three decades after it began, we can clearly state on the basis of the observations made above: This war will not solve the problems of the various societies of this earth and thus of humanity as a whole. Even if the complete destruction of the foundations of life through the use of nuclear and chemical

weapons does not occur, the consequences of the war will intensify the already existing problems.

Abdullah Öcalan makes clear how comprehensive the list of fundamental social problems is in his third defence paper. There, he details the solution of the following problems: power and state, morality and politics, mentality, economy, industrialism, ecology, sexism, women and the question of population, the family, urbanisation, class and bureaucracy, education and health, militarism and peace and democracy. (36) If no holistic solutions are found for all these problems in the foreseeable future, the existential threat to humanity will take on even more dramatic forms than what are already present today. The various powers of capitalist modernity - including the nation-state and globalist actors - are more concerned with fighting in power struggles; the democratic forces of this world have the responsibility to enable their respective societies and humanity as a whole to not only survive, but to live in freedom, equality and democracy. How important the role of the democratic forces are in this, and what concrete steps are necessary, will be the subject of the second part of our article.

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Part 2: The tasks of the democratic forces

The ambiguity of the democratic forces[1]

The observations made above illustrate the important role of democratic forces in the context of the Third World War. The conflicts of the various state actors of capitalist modernity are being fought at the expense of the societies, peoples, women, working people and youth of this world. They are in urgent need of strong democratic forces at the local, regional, and global levels that not only defend interests of society, but also use the vacuums created by the crisis of capitalist modernity to strengthen democracy, freedom and equality. The steady intensification and expansion of the Third World War in the course of the last three decades and the accompanying social, ecological, political and economic crises make it clear that democratic forces have not yet succeeded sufficiently as active actors in representing the interests of peoples and societies. A decisive factor in this situation is the widespread refusal to acknowledge the extent of the crisis and articulate the existence of a Third World War. Instead, the numerous conflicts in the world, such as in Ukraine, Kurdistan, Palestine, Taiwan, or Libya are understood as isolated from each other. Accordingly, responses are predominantly founded in local solutions, which inevitably do not have the desired effect due to the global interconnectedness of the respective conflict zones. Democratic forces are surprised when conflicts do not come to an end, despite local conditions seeming capable of providing one. Separating conflicts in Ukraine or Kurdistan from the dynamics of the global context, particularly of the Third World War, inevitably leads to the wrong strategy and tactics.

Similarly, there is the fallacy that the numerous political, economic and military conflicts are short-lived. Since the Third World War is an extremely long-term conflict, all actors involved are forced to demonstrate a very high degree of stamina, adaptability and far-sightedness. Just as the people of Chiapas have been fighting for their self-determination in an organised way

1 In the paradigm of democratic modernity, the term 'democratic forces' denotes both a historical lineage and its contemporary social actors. In Abdullah Öcalan's understanding of history, two streams have existed in history since the end of natural society and the emergence of civilisation, patriarchy, state and class about 5,000 years ago: state central civilisation and democratic civilisation. The democratic forces in this context are political forces that draw their strength from society itself and make politics with the aim of freedom, equality and democracy. To put it in the words of Abdullah Öcalan: "Politics is essentially the acts of freedom, equality, and democratization needed for moral and political society to sustain its nature or existence under any and all circumstances." (Sociology of Freedom)

for almost three decades, the Kurdish society under the leadership of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has been resisting since 1978 with all its organisational strength against the forces of capitalist modernity who refuse to recognise their existence and right to a free life. The situation is very similar in conflicts with state actors; for example in Iraq, Korea, Yemen, Cuba, Libya and the Sahel. Here, too, economic, political and military means of war are used, in some cases for decades. Those who recognise the protracted nature of the Third World War, including its numerous local manifestations, will be able to rely on a correspondingly long-term strategy and tactics, prepare their supporters and members appropriately, and display the necessary flexibility and creativity to emerge victorious from the Third World War.

In addition, many democratic forces are still struggling to recognise not only the military tools but also the economic, political, media and even biological means of warfare as part of the Third World War. This war does not begin and end with military confrontations, but is marked by the successive, simultaneous or alternating use of the tools mentioned. What began as a political conflict in the case of China was intensified by comprehensive economic sanctions. It was then supplemented by methods of biological warfare through the handling of the coronavirus pandemic[2], with threats towards open military confrontations in Taiwan in the near future. The war in Kurdistan, which has been intensely ongoing for decades, also shows how the targeted expulsion of the local population or the interruption of natural waterways, such as the Euphrates river, are utilised as further methods of warfare. The use of chemical and nuclear weapons has for some time been on the agenda of possible military conquests internationally, including the assault by the Turkish army against the People's Defence Forces (HPG) in Southern Kurdistan/Northern Iraq. In the context of the Third World War, therefore, an end or interruption of military conflicts does not mean the end of the war. Rather, the state actors of capitalist modernity rely on a variable repertoire of weapons that they can use depending on the course of the war.

Finally, it is also important to realise that the democratic forces are making a serious mistake in seeking clearly delineated and long-term alliances with state actors in the Third World War. Any democratic forces that rely on alliances with one or several of the state actors will quickly be enmeshed

2 The very fact that US and Chinese officials have accused each other in the media of being responsible for the outbreak of the Corona pandemic shows that these leading powers of capitalist modernity consider the use of such destructive biological weapons to be quite conceivable. (1)

in the reality of the Third World War. While relations among democratic forces are strategic in nature, relations with the state actors of capitalist modernity are necessarily characterised by tactical flexibility and short-termism. Yet it can still be observed that democratic forces repeatedly fall into the fallacy of strategically committing themselves to a state party to the conflict. NATO or Russia? China or the USA? Assad regime or the so-called 'West'? If democratic forces understand their options so narrowly, and instead of independent, flexible politics rely on strategic dependencies on state forces, they will do immense damage to their respective societies and the peoples of this world. This presents the high level of political, ideological, military and organisational skills required of international democratic forces to assert themselves as effective actors in the Third World War against the destructiveness of the forces of capitalist modernity.

The deepening of social problems in the course of the Third World War

Social issues deepen the longer the Third World War continues, the origins of which reside in the mentality and politics of capitalist modernity itself. Since the beginning of the war in the early 1990s, people's awareness of specific global issues has significantly increased. For example, today there are intense discussions about the ecological crisis, international refugee movements, health policies, or the numerous wars in the world. The lack of holism and weak practice of solution seeking and application are highly problematic. The democratic forces play an important role in this via their criticism and proposals for solutions. Abdullah Öcalan in his aforementioned book Sociology of Freedom deals extensively with twelve social problems that he identifies as the greatest challenges in the 21st century. Through his discussion of these social problems, he simultaneously highlights the extent of the crisis and the urgency for the democratic forces of the world to build an alternative to capitalist modernity. At the same time, he warns against isolating problems from eachother: *"I am aware of the dangers that result from partitioning the social problem into individual problems. This methodological approach developed by Eurocentric science using analytical reason[3] unconditionally may seem to have led to some achievements, but the danger of losing the totality of truth cannot be underestimated."* (2)

3 Abdullah Öcalan distinguishes between analytical and emotional intelligence. Analytical intelligence works through the method of separating the subject from the object (positivism) and allows humanity to look at things rationally, while emotional intelligence is holistically connected to social morality, nature and life. Öcalan sees the ideal in the middle, where humans use their extraordinary intellect in connection with social values and nature for the good of the greater whole.

Although a detailed discussion of the social problems discussed by Abdullah Öcalan is not possible here, it is nevertheless worthwhile to briefly look at their respective nature and significance. Democratic forces require a precise idea of an alternative form of social life to be effective - Öcalan outlines this in the concept of 'democratic modernity' – and many are working on its implementation today. When Abdullah Öcalan describes **power and the state** as a social problem, he is trying to illustrate the enormous expansion of state power in the form of the nation-state and the adjuvant disintegration of social structures. The UN currently comprises 193 nation states, which together subject practically all parts of the world to a centralised administrative logic. In addition, there are companies operating globally that are not organised as nation-states, but nevertheless follow the monopolistic and hierarchical logic of power and state. International investment firms such as Blackrock (10 trillion dollars in capital under management in January 2022 (3)) or hedge funds such as Bridgwater Associates, whose founder Ray Dalio was at times considered one of the most influential people in the USA (4), are concrete examples of globally organised forms of the logic of state power. It is observable in the last three decades how capitalist modernity is constantly expanding this logic. Manifestations are expressed through the creation of new, small nation-states – such as Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina or the nation-state-like Autonomous Region of Kurdistan - and the expansion of influence of globally operating companies such as Amazon (turnover 1996: 16 million dollars, turnover 2020: 386 billion dollars (5)). This is accompanied by disenfranchisement of every aspect of life.

According to Öcalan, the expansion of power and state results in a *"weakened society, deprived of its ability to defend itself"* (6). He summarises this development as a **problem of morality and politics**. Öcalan understands morality as the way *"to equip society with the rules necessary to continue existing and provide the capacity to implement them"*, while he sees the purpose of politics as providing *"society with the necessary moral rules and, through a process of continuous discussion, to decide on the means and methods needed to meet society's fundamental material and intellectual needs"*. (7) In contrast, *"power and the state apparatuses and relations have always instituted "law" in place of social morality and imposed "state administration" in place of social politics at the first opportunity'"*. (8)

The weakening of social morality and the displacement of society's political institutions can be observed in the lives of each individual and their respective societies. The fact that about three quarters of the people in

Germany distrust the national political parties, and that this figure reaches 90% in Hungary and Spain, (9) gives an impression of the extent to which belief in institutional political culture has disintegrated in many parts of the world. Connected to this, Öcalan refers to the **social mentality problem** as one of the central challenges of our time. By this he means the dangerous consequences of the weakening of self-determined social thinking and its appropriation by state institutions of knowledge production, education, belief and media. Öcalan comes to this conclusion through centring society's ability to think: *"As experience was accumulated, society developed, which, in essence, was the result of this concentration of thought. The more experience a society gained and the more focused this thought became, the more ability and strength it gained, with the result that it was better able to feed, defend, and reproduce itself."* (10)

Both the nation states across the world and the globalist forces[4] of capitalist modernity are striving to extend their hegemony over how individuals and entire societies think and experience. Young people in Germany spend an average of more than three hours a day watching videos on Netflix, Amazon Prime or Youtube (11) and spend seven to eight hours each week day in state institutions of education; this reflects a deep capacity for appropriation of social patterns of thought and experience.

A society whose moral and political capacities have been severely weakened is bound to experience serious **economic problems**. In this context, Öcalan states: *"All economic problems, foremost unemployment, are linked to capitalization of society."* (12) He considers it highly problematic *"that capital constrains society to profit-oriented activities. However, activity for the sake of profit and capital does not meet society's fundamental needs."* (13) In the course of intensive attacks on the economic self-sufficiency of the societies of the world, natural and social wealth has and is being monopolised by the forces of capitalist modernity on a historically unprecedented scale. The expropriation and monopolisation of land has been particularly important in this process. Today this process is far advanced, so that in England, for example, less than 1% of the population owns 50% of the land. (14)

In the USA, the Californian Emmersons family owns almost 1 million hect-

4 **Editor's note:"globalist" is often used as a far-right term. In this piece, "globalist forces" is used by the author to reference actors who are comprised of multi-national corporations, investment funds, offshore financial centres, private militaries, and so on. The term here describes a non-nationalist or non-dualistic power axis (e.g. instead of a conflict positioned solely between nations or between East and West, there are alliances within the capitalist class across the world).*

ares of land, making them the largest landowners in the country, while Amazon owner Jeff Bezos calls 170,000 hectares of land his own. (15) People are violently disconnected from both material economic production and systems of knowledge which are accumulated over millennia. This is accompanied by a rapid increase in dependence on economy monopolies organised in the logic of state power. A major symptom of this development is the rising high unemployment rate in most countries. For example, the official unemployment rate in the three most affected countries in 2021 was almost 34% (South Africa), over 28% (Djibouti) and almost 29% (Swaziland). (16) The extreme monopolisation and economic disenfranchisement of a large part of humanity are leading to serious problems, observed increasingly in all regions of the world. The number of people suffering from hunger has increased worldwide by 150 million people to the total of 828 million in the last three years. (17)

Directly linked to the deepening of economic problems is **industrialism**,[5] which has spread across all continents since the 17th century. In his presentation of this problem, Öcalan attaches great importance to distinguishing between industry as a millennia-old social achievement, and the industrialism of capitalist modernity. *"Industry is like the nuclear option. When it is used by the monopolies it can be an unparalleled threat to life, portending both ecological disaster and war. Indeed, its use for making profit has become increasingly evident, accelerating environmental destruction. Industry is rapidly moving society toward virtual society. Humans are increasingly being replaced by robotics. If this continues, it will not be long before humans themselves are redundant."* (18)

In the US, industrial production has increased more than 20-fold in the past 100 years. (19) As a direct result, humanity now faces an enormous **ecological problem**. Solving the ecological crisis has been one of the main demands of democratic forces in all parts of the world for decades. Youth and women's movements in particular have organised international resistance to the ecological destruction of capitalist modernity in recent years. The governments of the individual nation states and the globally

5 Öcalan does not call industry itself, which could also be used in a positive way for society, industrialism, but industry in the service of the profit- and capital-oriented monopolies. He calls industrialism a *"monopolistic ideology and apparatus"* that has an ideological, class and military character and is mainly responsible for environmental destruction, unemployment and the emergence of the 'virtual society', in which man is alienated from himself, society and nature through progressive robotisation, by using industrial methods for profit maximisation and capital accumulation.

organised forces have mainly pursued a policy of appropriation and appeasement, since they themselves know very well that the profit logic of capitalist modernity makes a solution to the ecological problem impossible. It therefore comes as little surprise that CO2 emissions reached a new all-time high of 36.3 gigatonnes in 2021. (20) With the escalation of the Ukraine war there is now a greater emphasis on suppressing the debate on ecological problems since - according to the logic of the state actors - the war and the economic crisis have shifted priorities, for example regarding the necessity of gas and the silence against ecological destruction in war.

Abdullah Öcalan discusses the complex of **social sexism and the family, women and population question** as another pressing issue. Although an intensive discourse and related practice has existed in feminism for decades, democratic forces still struggle to understand the problem in its historical and sociological depth and to comprehensively put solutions into practice which originate from and are accepted by the society. As the Third World War intensifies, the forces of capitalist modernity are promoting a sexist culture, which is weaponised to weaken women, who are the most important source of strength in resistance and communal values in society. This also prevents social peace by destroying the relationship between genders. The institution of the family is exposed to extensive attack which ultimately leads to its disintegration, while it is simultaneously transfigured, especially by nationalist forces, and forced into a corset of patriarchal values. The current population of about eight billion people in the world is expected to grow by another two billion by 2050 (21), which will deepen other social problems. Women suffer the most from these developments. In the context of a patriarchal logic of war, women are confronted with an increasingly sexist culture, with which comes enormous pressure to conform according to bodily ideals, family values and the role of being a mother.

The phenomenon of extreme **urbanisation** is also an important problem of the 21st century. The city in itself is a result of social creativity whose history may go back more than 10,000 years. For about 5,000 years, the forces of state and power have used the city as their organising base. However, as Öcalan points out, *"the real crisis of urbanization emerged with the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution. This was no coincidence but was an aspect of the antisocial nature of industrialism. The primary responsibility for the ecological problems created by the city lies with its fundamental detachment from the environment."* (22) This development has

now reached such extreme proportions that urban metropolises such as Tokyo have an official population of more than 38 million people, and nine other cities worldwide have at least 20 million inhabitants. Since 1985, the proportion of people living in cities worldwide has increased from 41.2% to almost 58%. Estimates put the figure at 62.5% by 2050. (23) The social, cultural, economic and environmental consequences will continue to worsen if this is not addressed.

Öcalan's describes the **class and bureaucracy problem** as relevant because the constant existence, and expansion, of these two phenomena have unfavourable effects on the moral-political state of society. They elicit a normalisation of exploitative relations and displacement of social structures of self-government and self-defence. In this context, Abdullah Öcalan considers the role of the middle class in capitalist modernity as particularly dangerous: *"It is the class that has developed capital's economic, political, military, ideological, and scientific monopoly at a global level, making it the most anti-society class."* (24) Because of their millennia-old history, classes and bureaucracy may appear to many people today as inevitable institutions. But Öcalan warns: *"Just because the classes we mention have existed does not make them legitimate or representative of true social values. A tumor cannot be considered a normal part of the body, and we can see social phenomena in the same way. Besides, all of the oppressed and exploited lower classes have arisen as a result of the force and the hegemonic ideologies of power and the state."* (25) By creating enormous bureaucratic apparatuses, the nation-states of the world are trying to expand their control over areas of social life that were originally self-governing. By extension, this binds parts of the population directly to the nation states through financial dependence and by allowing the state to demonstrate it's capacity to act. According to the logic of the nation state, this trend knows no boundaries. In many countries, a large parts of the population are now directly employed by the state, e.g. just over 30% in Denmark, almost 29% in Australia and 25% in Bosnia-Herzegovina. (26)

The **education and health problems** of the 21st century represent another central challenge for societies. Öcalan says *"In capitalist modernity, nation-state control of education and health is considered vital. Without taking control of these two fields, upon which society's existential, healthy, and open-minded development depends, and constructing monopolistic domination over them, it is extremely difficult to maintain an overall hegemony and exploitation. Control of education and health is extraordinarily important to the monopolies, since they understand that they cannot make*

society their property by military force alone." (27) In Germany, 8.4 million pupils currently attend general education schools and 2.4 million vocational schools (28), while almost three million people study at German universities. (29) In comparison, the so-called free alternative schools, which differ strongly from state educational methods through a democratic pedagogy, have just 9,500 pupils in the whole of Germany. (30) In the health sector, the nation-state or corporate actors of capitalist modernity have a similarly strong dominance. Both the training, certification, control and employment of doctors and other health personnel are almost entirely in their hands.

What devastating consequences **militarism** has for society is a globally recognised issue, especially after the devastating world wars of the 20th century. At the same time, since the beginning of the 2000s, in the form of the global `war on terrorism' and today's confrontation between the various state actors of the multipolar world, we can observe a steady strengthening of militaristic culture and military armament. After decades of war, large parts of the world, especially the Middle East and many African countries, now lie in ruins. With the start of the war in Ukraine, the people of Europe and Russia are again directly feeling the destructive consequences of militarism. Abdullah Öcalan discusses this problem against the background of its millennia-old history and its indispensable role in state power politics: *"The military is the most sharply organized arm of capital and power. Thus, it follows that it is the institution that ultimately subjugates and cages society. The military has always been the power that has penetrated, controlled, and subjugated society regardless of the form of the state, but it reached its apex in the era of the middle class (bourgeois) and under nation-state monopoly. The defining characteristic of the nation-state is that in the name of creating an official army the rest of society was officially disarmed and the monopoly on arms was transferred to the state and the army."* (31) At $2113 billion, in 2021, global spending on arms and material for war exceeded $2 trillion for the first time since records began. (32)

Directly linked to militarism, humanity today also faces a **peace and democracy problem**. In this context, Abdullah Öcalan notes: *"When a society can no longer create and run institutions that provide meaningful moral and political guidance, that society has succumbed to oppression and exploitation. It is in a "state of war." It is possible to define history as a "state of war" waged by civilizations against society. When morality and politics are dysfunctional, there is only one path open to a society: self-defense.*

A state of war is nothing more than the absence of peace. As such, only self-defense will make peace possible. A peace with no self-defense can only be an expression of submission and slavery. Liberalism today imposes on societies and peoples peace with no self-defense. The unilateral game of democratic stability and reconciliation is nothing but a fig leaf on the bourgeois class domination achieved by the armed forces. It is nothing but a covert state of war." (33)

This basic approach makes it clear that it is not only the numerous military conflicts in the world, but the incessant attacks by the state on the moral and political capacities of societies that constitute a state of war. Thus, as long as the forces of capitalist modernity not only continue their wars, but keep adding new ones, and at the same time the societies of this world do not develop sufficient self-defence capabilities, the lack of peace and democracy will continue to be a problem of all humanity.

The danger of the appropriation of social discontent by nationalism and militarism

All over the world, societies, peoples, women, youth and the working people are searching for ways out of the social problems described above. A significant number of them are looking for an alternative way of life, a basis in which capitalist modernity and the crises it has caused can be overcome. People's increasing openness to the search for a life based on freedom, democracy and equality is providing important reinforcement to the democratic forces of the world, as well as increasing their number of supporters and members. At the same time, the forces of capitalist modernity are making enormous efforts to prevent this, and to capture and channel social discontent elsewhere. Since the forces of capitalist modernity do not have any solution to offer for the existing problems, they try to divert attention from the systemic crises, especially by creating a nationalist and militarist atmosphere, and by smothering the social search for solutions in nationalist-militarist agitation. The effect can be seen in the rise of nationalist parties in many countries around the world. Accordingly, it is important that democratic forces are aware of the political strategy behind the spread of nationalism and militarism, and they specifically oppose these policies. All these forces must be careful – to not become entrenched in the militarist-nationalist logic, but at the same time have the responsibility to protect their respective societies from the dangerous consequences of this state distraction policy. Hatred between peoples, the legitimisation of the Third World War, the promotion of a chauvinistic self-image of indi-

vidual societies, and the concealment of contradictions between society and the state must not be part of the politics of democratic forces. Against the background of policies of the actors of capitalist modernity and the urgency of the social problems, the democratic forces of the world have a responsibility to not simply go along with the state's policies of nationalism and militarism. Both the scale of the crisis and the non-statist nature of the democratic forces, require more creative, independent and far-sighted policies to defend the interests of both individual societies and humanity as a whole in the context of the Third World War.

Peace Policy on the Basis of the Paradigm of Democratic Modernity

Wars are one of the most important forums of politics in the interest of states. On the other hand, societies and their democratic forces create political culture based on the peaceful negotiation in existing contradictions and conflicts. However, to respond to the Third World War with only a classic peace policy would be to fall short. This is because the Third World War is a conflict in which the ideological and organisational foundations of the politics of state power are being renegotiated. As shown above, in this war the nation states are not only fighting for their respective positions in the world (similar to World War I and World War II), but there is also a conflict between nation-state and globalist forces over the preservation and renewal of the capitalist status quo. Accordingly, in the Third World War, even the forces of capitalist modernity are asking the system question. An appropriate politics of the democratic forces necessitates combining peace politics with the construction of an alternative to capitalist modernity. The Kurdistan Freedom Movement and its ideological leader Abdullah Öcalan have created a strong basis of suggestions via the system of democratic modernity. In this context, Kurdish society, the PKK and the Kurdistan Freedom Movement have been pursuing a peace policy against the destructive consequences of the Third World War on the basis of the system of democratic modernity since the early 2000s. This policy can best be observed in practice today in the revolution in Rojava and the Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria. A strategy has been pursued for more than ten years to expand social self-defence and self-administration and to displace state power structures, without taking sides with either of the two states that are parties in the conflict.

This 'policy of the third way' illustrates that a democratic force - in this case the PKK - can emerge in the Third World War as a self-confident actor, which simultaneously manages the urgent task of defence against at-

tacks, alongside the development of social self-administration structures. As a result, the Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria today represents the strongest advocate of peace and democracy in the Middle East, consistently working towards a political solution to the war in Syria and the political chaos in the entire Middle East. The Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria would not be able to act now as such an influential voice of peace that engages all actors in the region with a democratic solution without the practical implementation of democratic modernity. Since 2012, the implementation of this system of self governance in all areas of social life is ongoing. A large number of the societies in the world today do not have sufficiently organised democratic forces with a corresponding programme, strategy and tactics, based on a comprehensive paradigm according to their concrete conditions. It is all the more important for all democratic forces of the world to recognise the system of democratic modernity as a source of strength and inspiration for their respective struggles and to deepen their understanding of the paradigm. Once they do so, they will be better able to understand their society, the state that is at odds with them, and the nature of capitalist modernity. This will allow them to educate and organise their members in a promising way and support their society to become increasingly self-defending and self-governing. In this sense, the democratic forces who make the system of democratic modernity the basis of their peace policy efforts will experience the most successful response to the Third World War.

The need for alliances of democratic forces

Just as important as the development of ideological-organisational strength, in paradigm of democratic modernity, is the timing of political action of the democratic forces all over the world. The forces of capitalist modernity will continue to expand the Third World War in the coming years and decades. In addition to the centre of war in the Middle East and the recent expansion to Europe, Asia is likely to become caught up in the logic of military escalation. Against the deepening of the Third World War and the resulting intensification of the social problems discussed above, the democratic forces must build regional platforms. With the help of these 'Democratic Platforms of Democratic Modernity', they can develop the necessary power to stop the state-provoked wars and prevent new conflicts.

The tasks of these regional platforms are extensive, and they can ultimately only be determined by the democratic forces active on the ground. On the one hand, it is fundamental to express social rejection of war and

thus to visibilise the rejection of militaristic-nationalistic policies of states. A policy of solidarity, unity and peace must oppose the dangerous attempts of the forces of capitalist modernity to divide societies and peoples and proliferate wars between them. In addition, the democratic forces of the regional platforms will have to organise direct mutual support among themselves. This can be done, for example, in the field of diplomacy, media, finance or self-defence. Through support for regions particularly affected by the Third World War, such as Kurdistan, the local democratic forces can be enabled to pursue independent, non-state politics and the society can be empowered to defend itself instead of fleeing. The regional platforms can exchange experiences, knowledge and ideas with each other in the form of conferences, academies and congresses in order to benefit from the different experiences of organising and resistance. This is especially important considering the 'Democratic Platforms of Democratic Modernity' must actively work on building democratic modernity. The scope for building social self-defence and self-governance structures is already enormous, and will continue to expand as the Third World War unfolds. In the Middle East, Europe, Asia and other parts of the world, democratic forces will have not just the opportunity, but the urgent responsibility to empower societies to meet their own needs and defend their interests.

On the basis of a correct analysis of the Third World War, a profound understanding of the system of democratic modernity and political unification will develop. In the form of regional alliances, the democratic forces' capacity for defence will emerge even more confidently, courageously and effectively in the interests of all the societies, peoples, women, youth and workers of the world, and by extension to safeguard the existence of humanity as a whole. They will not only stop the dangerous expansion of the Third World War and the destruction of all bases of life. By building democratic modernity, they will increasingly condemn the logic of power and state into insignificance. The sooner the international democratic forces begin this task, the sooner the Third World War will end, and the way will be paved for a worldwide democratic awakening.

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The Third World War is shaping our world today. There are challenges to understanding political developments and finding an effective response as democratic forces in local regions, countries, continents and across the world. In the following, we attempt to present the basic motivations and conflicts of the forces of capitalist modernity in the Third World War and define its specific characteristics and distinction from the previous world wars. We will also show ways for the world's democratic forces to utilise their inevitable participation in this war to build an alternative to capitalist modernity and to solve the enormous social problems of the 21st century.

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