

## Program for Conference

14–16 April 2017, Hamburg University, Audimax

### CHALLENGING CAPITALIST MODERNITY III

UNCOVERING DEMOCRATIC MODERNITY: RESISTANCE, REBELLION AND BUILDING THE NEW

**14 April 2017 – Friday**

**08:00–12:00 Opening, Welcoming Speeches and Messages**

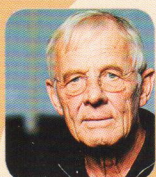
Registration | 08:00–10:00

Opening Performance: | 10:00–10:30



**Mesopotamia Dance Society**, the world's first Kurdish contemporary dance company, founded in 2005. Their starting point is the culture of the Middle East and their performances have encompassed the traditions of the region but with contemporary form and aesthetics. "Mem û Zin", "Destana Kawa", "4 Kapî 40 Makam" and "Leyla" – the life of Leyla Bedirxan are some examples. The Mesopotamia Dance Society has presented its projects to wide audiences in Kurdistan, Turkey and Europe.

**Welcoming Speeches and Messages | 10:30–11:30**



**Rolf Becker**, is an actor and trade unionist. He has been active in the solidarity campaign for Nicaragua in 1979 and for Greece since 2012. He stayed in Yugoslavia for a week when it was bombed by NATO in 1999. He visited Mumia Abu Jamal on death row in 2009 and traveled to Amed/Diyarbakir (Kurdish part of Turkey) during the clashes in the Sur district in 2016.

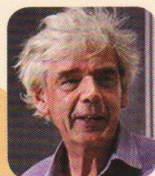


**Hamburg Women's and People's Assembly** – represented by co-chairs Hatice Kaya and Abuzer Bilenler: The very first women only and people's assemblies were founded in Hamburg in 2005.

There are now two of each in Hamburg, with 8 different committees dealing with the day-to-day needs of society.



**Prof. Frank Adloff** is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Socio-economics at the University of Hamburg. His work focuses on the gift theory, on civil society, affects and convivialism.



**Prof. John Holloway** is a Professor of Sociology at the Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades in the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico and Honorary Visiting Professor at the University of Rhodes, South Africa. He has published widely on Marxist theory, on the Zapatista movement and on the new forms of anti-capitalist struggle. His books *Change the World without taking Power* (new edition 2010) and *Crack Capitalism* (2010), have stirred international debate and have each been translated into eleven languages.

**Opening Speech:**



**Havin Guneser** is an engineer, journalist and a women's rights activist. She is one of the spokespersons of the International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan" and translator of Öcalan's books.



**Asrin Law Office** founded to represent Abdullah Öcalan in legal proceedings after the international plot to abduct him and hand him over to Turkish Authorities. Ever since

the very first trial held at İmralı the lawyers at the Law Office have been subjected to oppression and intimidation. They have been lynched, forced into exile, imprisoned without trial (some five years others two and a half years), and there are many more cases pending against them. They have not been able to see their client, Abdullah Öcalan, since 2011 but despite this and other difficulties they continue to represent him.



**12:00–14:00 Session I**

## Breaking Down the Mindset of Capitalist Civilization



**Moderation:** **Rahila Gupta** is a freelance writer and activist, and a long standing member of Southall Black Sisters. Her articles are widely published including in *The Guardian* and on *Open Democracy*. She visited Rojava in 2016 as part of her research for a new book, *Why Doesn't the Patriarchy Die*.



**1.1. Cracks in the Global Megamachine | Fabian Scheidler** works and lives in Berlin. He is a writer for the print media, television, theatre and opera. In 2009 he co-founded the independent newscast *Kontext TV*, producing broadcasts on global justice issues. In 2015 his book *"The*

*End of the Megamachine. The History of a Failing Civilization"* was published in German. The Robert Jungk Library for Future Studies elected the book as being among the TOP 10 of future publications.

The capitalist Megamachine has entered into a chaotic phase. Which opportunities does this offer to overcome the tyrannies of the militarized state, the structural violence of the economy, the myths of modernity and the tyranny of technocratic thinking? And why is it useful to look at the very beginnings of all these phenomena many thousand years ago?



**1.2 A continuous State of War | Ebru Günay** is a practicing lawyer since 2008. She was arrested in 2009 for defending Abdullah Öcalan legally. She was released after 5 years in custody. She has written an article on *Jineoloji* in the book *"Jineoloji tartışmaları"* (Discussions on *Jineoloji*).

She completed her postgraduate studies in the area of human rights law at Istanbul Bilgi University. She continues to be a practicing lawyer at the Asrın Law Office.

Capitalism is anti-nature, anti-society and anti-women: Destruction under the banner or creation is an inherent aspect of capitalism. Does capitalism need a continuous state of war to survive, to breed itself? And why may patriarchy be at the heart of all this?



**1.3 Construction of Fear and "Human Surplus" | Dawn Paley** is a journalist and the author of *"Drug War Capitalism"* (AK Press, 2014). Her ongoing research is focused on autonomous organizing against forced disappearances in the northern state of Coahuila, Mexico.

In war zones like Mexico or the Middle East people are forced from the land they live on and rendered jobless. Having no food or housing they are pushed into modern day slavery and ready to do whatever it takes to survive. Those who are still able to lead a "normal" life are convinced to comply and be silent. In other places people feel forced to defend what they have, ready to accept the human sacrifice in order to keep what they have. But what do they have?



**1.4 Society of the Spectacle: Arts, Sports, Sex and Media | Ferda Çetin** is a graduate from the Faculty of Law, University of Istanbul. He worked as a journalist in the weekly newspaper *Yeni Ülke* and in the dailies *Özgür Gündem* and *Özgür Ülke*, all published in Turkey, in *Özgür Politika*, published in Europe, and the television channels *Med TV*, *Medya TV*, *Roj TV*, *Sterk TV* and *Med Nuce TV*. He is a member of SNJ (Union of Journalists in France) and IFJ (International Federation of Journalists).

Parts of the population are kept away from doing anything meaningful. Struggling to survive and have food, shelter and education, they are distracted through the distortion and use of arts, sports, sex and media and information monopolies. How does the system succeed in using technology to conquer the mind?

## Call for Papers Topic

### 1.5. Genealogy of the State

The forms that state and power assume throughout civilizational history are subject to transformations. How do ideological constructs like patriarchy, religions, nationalism, militarism and scientism become ever new armors for the state and class society? How do they relate to freedom and the lack of it?



**Öcalan and Bakunin: An Incomplete Discussion | Carlos Pazmiño** is a researcher of the Kurdish question from a Latin America perspective. His master thesis *"Dismantling the State"* focuses on aspects in understanding the theoretical-practical transition of Abdullah Öcalan and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Pazmiño's work will be one of the first academic texts from Latin America discussing this topic. Pazmiño serves as a militant in some popular spaces, linked to trade unions and territorial struggles, he writes online about Latin America and the Middle East.

Mihail Bakunin was one of the most important anarchist theorists and leftist leader of the 19th century. What are similarities and differences between his view and Abdullah Öcalan's on the state, revolutionary tactics against the state, political organization, the role of the revolutionary subject and women's liberation? And what does this mean for revolution in the 21st century?

**14:00–15:00 Discussion**

**15:00–16:00 Break**



**16:00–18:00 Session II****Beyond State:  
Thinking and Building Alternatives**

**Moderation: Debbie Bookchin** is an author, journalist and editor. She co-edited the recently released book *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, (Verso), essays by her father, Murray Bookchin.

**Call for Papers Topic****2.1 Philosophy of History**

Öcalan describes history mainly as a history of struggles between state civilization and pre-state village and agricultural communities. At the same time he attributes utmost importance to historical consciousness for the building of a liberated society. So why does it matter how we look at history?



**Acknowledging the history of now, understanding it and building tomorrow | Özlem Ekinbaş** born in 1984 in Urfa, Siverek, she was imprisoned for two years at Urfa E-Type Prison for political reasons. Abdullah Öcalan's "Sociology of Freedom" led her to focus on archeology.

Thus, she worked at Göbekli Tepe excavations for 3 seasons and at Harran excavations for 2 years. She worked in local governance on women's policies for 18 months. Having finished her degree in Archeology, she is doing her masters at the University of Kocaeli. History is more than a number of things that happened in the past. Everything is defined by its history. To separate history from the now is deceiving. What kind of consciousness of history does a free society need?



**2.2 The Geist of Democratic Civilization | Haskar Kırmızıgül** was born in 1975 in Der-sim. She completed her education at the Marmara University in the Department of History. For the past twenty years she has been an activist in the Kurdish freedom movement. She worked as a journalist at the Sorgul women's journal in Lebanon for two years and Roj TV for 4 years. She is now interested in Jineology and is doing research and activism in this area.

Revolutions and struggles of the past has shown us that having only good intentions and knowing what to reject is not enough. We also need to be able to define what we want. If all that we have is done by the human hand, then it can be changed and transformed by the human hand. In the Manifesto for a Democratic Civilisation, Abdullah Öcalan proposes that Jineoloji and the sociology of freedom be at the heart of it.



**2.3 Democratic Nation | Reimar Heider** is a physician by training and a human rights activist. He is one of the spokespersons of the International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan" and has translated several books by Öcalan.

Nationalism seems to be on the rise again in many parts of the world, but it is also widely contested. In the Middle East, the Islamic State tried to replace the concept of nation by the Islamic umma. Bolivia has recently defined itself as a plurinational state. What can Öcalan's concept of a "Democratic Nation" contribute to a peaceful future?



**2.4 Self-Defence: De-constructing how the Society is Left Defenceless | Hanım Engizek** is a Kurdish human rights and women's activist. She was imprisoned for many years in Turkey because of her political thoughts. She took part in women's media and worked with Kurdish women

in Europe to raise awareness and strengthen their organization. She continues to work with Kurdish women in Europe and is a member of the Kurdish women's freedom movement in Europe. We are bound by endless limits and restrictions, physically and in our minds. While we are subjected to violence by the state or the head of the family, any kind of self defence or protection is regarded as either immoral or criminal. How can we reclaim and redefine ourselves and self-defence both in terms of the mind and physical? And how can we prevent this from becoming repressive itself? Why are the women guerrillas smiling despite the war conditions?

**18:00–19:00 Discussion****15 April 2017 – Saturday****09:30–11:30 Session III****Ways of Building and Defending  
the New**

**Moderation: Simon Dubbins** is Director of International for UNITE the Union, the largest UK union with 1.4 million members. Simon began working with the Graphical Paper and Media Union in 1997 and then became head of International for AMICUS in 2004. He was then appointed Director of International for UNITE in 2007. He now coordinates the European and international work of UNITE across all its sectors, and also directs the unions extensive solidarity work in relation to Colombia, Palestine, Kurdistan and other areas.

In December 2016 we made a "CALL FOR PAPERS" to write on one of five topics. Students, academics and several political prisoners responded. The submitted papers were reviewed by a committee and the authors invited to present them at the conference. The Call for Papers will become a steady part of future conferences.





**3.1 "Resist, Revolt and Build the New"**  
| **Zilan Yağmur** studied political science at Marburg University. At the university and in life she is focusing on the importance of women's freedom and youth's struggle. For the past three years she has been active in YXK and JXX.

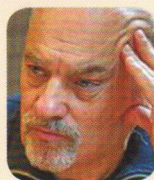
For decades, the Kurdish movement has claimed that "berxwedan jiyan e", resistance is life. This is still the basis for any change, transformation and revolution. Past struggles have shown that together with resistance, one needs to revolt and most importantly build the new! Why are women and the youth seen to play the most crucial and leading role in this? How can this revolutionize the revolution?



**3.2 Re-Thinking Resistance: Smashing Bureaucracies and Classes** | **David Graeber** teaches anthropology at the London School of Economics. Active in a number of anti-authoritarian activist projects from the Direct Action Network in 2000 to Occupy Wall Street in

2011, he is also the author of books such as "Debt: The First Five Thousand Years", "Lost People", "Direct Action: An Ethnography", "Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology", and most recently, "The Utopia of Rules".

States create a society with a statist mindset. In a revolutionary situation like in Northern Syria some of society's structures are suspended for a historical moment. How can we actively struggle against their (re-)emerging so that what is being created is not swamped and appropriated by patriarchal and capitalist structures.



**3.3 Dispersing Power: How to prevent the monopolization of power** | **Raul Zibechi** is a journalist and researcher in social movements, and a militant in Uruguay. He supports and works with movements in several Latin American countries. He publishes in the newspapers

*La Jornada* (Mexico), *Gara* (Euskadi) and *Brecha* (Uruguay). His latest books are "Decolonizing Critical Thinking and Rebellion" and "The Other World in Motion".

It is not enough to oppose state, power and hierarchy. Through what means can we change society so that power is not concentrated again in state-like structures. In the daily task of creating the new how can the change from below be made effective and lasting? In what way are movements like the Zapatistas and the Kurdish freedom movement linked when it comes to building non-state power?



**3.4 How to move ahead: Extraordinary State violence and Terror while making revolution** | **Fuat Kav** was born in Siverek, Urfa in 1959. In 1976 he became active in the struggle for Kurdish people's freedom. He was arrested in 1980, severely tortured and placed

at the infamous Diyarbakir Prison No. 5. He received a death sentence and was imprisoned for 20 years and 6 months. His articles have been published in different newspapers and websites. He has written the book "Mavi Ring", which was made into an award-winning film. He was forced into exile in March 2003 due to threats against his life. He works with various democratic

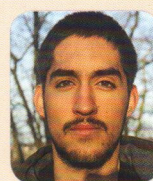
and civil society organisations in Europe.

Through the use of violence and fear the state tries to disrupt the building of the new. How have the Kurds overcome this in the past? What happened in North Kurdistan right after the collapse of talks and how have people responded in Newroz? How are people overcoming fears and re-organizing themselves to build the new?

## Call for Papers Topic

### 3.5 Call for Papers Topic: Moral and political society

Öcalan bases his analysis of democratic civilization and his model of democratic modernity on what he calls the "moral and political society". Why does this become the cornerstone of his model and how is it related to freedom? How does it supplement and/or differ from Marxism and other schools of thought?



**Stages of Liberation: Kurdistan and Fanon's Concept of the Anticolonial Revolution** | **Miguel Juquin** is a student of Political Science at the Free University of Berlin. He recently worked on anti-colonial theory, Marxist state theory and Marxist analysis of contemporary racism. He is active in political education and organising in migrant communities in Berlin.

Frantz Fanon describes the anticolonial national liberation and the subsequent social revolution as two successive steps on the way to liberation. The Kurdish freedom movement seems to follow this pattern. How can we extend Marx's concept of political and human emancipation for the colonial context? And what does this mean for the relation to the state?

**12:00–13:00 Discussion**

**13:00–14:30 Lunch Break**

**14:30–18:00 Session IV**

## Working-groups and Work-shops

Please check the separate programme that will be handed out during the conference

**18:00–19:00 Break**

### 19:00–20:30 Evening Activity

Performances by Women Dengbêj and Mesopotamia Dance  
Dengbêj: Ayda Riha, Tawê Efrini, Narîn Şêxê  
Musicians: Yasin Boyraz, Mehmet Yamalak



**15 April 2017 – Saturday – 19:00 Evening Activity**

## Performances by Women Dengbêj and Mesopotamia Dance



Narîn Şêxê

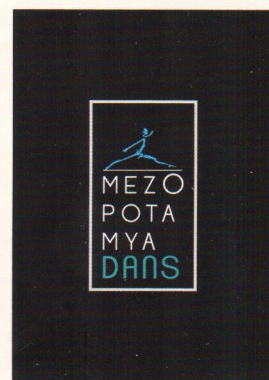


Tawê Efrini,

Musicians: Yasin Boyraz, Mehmet Yamalak



Ayda Riha



**16 April 2017 – Sunday**

**10:00–12:00 Session V**

## Capitalism CAN be Overcome: Imagine the “Unimaginable”



**Moderation: Silke Helfrich** is a freelance author and scholar, co-founder of Commons Strategies Group and of Commons Institute e. V., for many years representative for Central America, Mexico and Cuba of the Heinrich Böll Foundation. Editor of “Wem gehört die Welt?” (2009), “The Wealth of the Commons: A World Beyond Market and State” (2012) and “Patterns of Commoning” (2015), a topic she is currently researching.

### Call for Papers Topic

#### 5.1 Call for Papers Topic: Ecological economy, city and countryside

*Öcalan emphasizes the hostility of cities towards life and develops a vision of ecological villages. A profound ecological transformation must address fundamental questions about the relation between city and countryside. What can the relation between cities and villages look like under the premise of democratic confederalism?*



**Agriculture and Food: Contradictions and Solutions | Cora Roelofs** is an activist with the Boston and North American Rojava solidarity movements. She holds an ScD and MS and has written many papers on labor and environmental issues. Her political food obsessions have resulted in a Kimchi festival, food support for Occupy, and public library permaculture.

How can Rojava, now the Democratic Federation of North Syria, achieve food sovereignty, self-sufficiency, and security, in a non-extractivist manner that feeds all the many and diverse people in a just and liberatory society? How can Rojava functionally address the root causes of hierarchy, exploita-

tion, unfreedom, and ecological destruction embedded in agriculture itself? Can Rojava make real the South American dream of “buen vivir,” or “collective well-being in harmony with nature”?



**5.2 Commoning and Self-Sustenance | Friederike Habermann**, economist, historian, and author. Having been in Chiapas in 1996, she became active in the global resistance movement. Today, she lives in a commons based project. She developed the ‘subject based hegemony theory’, arguing that identity categories are re-constructed within the struggle for hegemony. Her recent book: */Ecommony/* (2016). In capitalism, almost everything is defined by commodity production and money. But most of what humans do and have done in the past are different kinds of work: raising children, caring for each other, sharing, working together to sustain a community. How can we place economy on its feet again and produce commons?



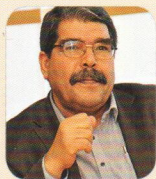
**5.3 Local decisions and regional democratic confederalism (breaking with the logic of nation-state) | Eleanor Finley** is an activist, author, and an anthropologist. She is a board member at the Institute for Social Ecology (ISE) in Plainfield, Vermont and a PhD student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she studies social movements, political ecology, and radical democracy. Democratic confederalism does not only deal with the internal organisation of a society. It also offers great potential for the restructuring of the relations of communities across state borders. How can it become a truly international movement?



**5.4 Matriarchy: Breaking the Logic of Patriarchy | Halime Kurt** is an activist in the Kurdish freedom movement and was imprisoned in Turkey for 10 years for her political views. She is also an activist in the Kurdish women’s freedom movement in Europe. She was a journalist and a women’s news presenter on the now closed MedNûçe TV channel. She continues to work as a journalist.



The fight for gender justice continues - but can we really think of an end of patriarchy? What would, what DID a world without patriarchy look like? And how are we getting there (again)?



**5.5 Breaking with the Logic of Militarism | Salih Muslim Muhammad** was born in 1951 in a small village called Sheran (Arslan Tash) just outside of Kobani. He graduated with a BA in Chemical Engineering at Istanbul Technical University in 1977. He has been active in politics

and as a result was frequently imprisoned and tortured by Bashar Assad's intelligence services both in Damascus and Aleppo. He was one of the founders of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in 2003. In 2012, he was re-elected as co-president of the PYD, together with Asya Abdullah.

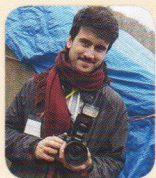
Rojava is besieged from all sides by many armies and armed groups. Such a situation seems to offer no alternative to internal militarization. But Rojava is trying to fight against militarism despite the need for self-defense in a fierce war. How does that work?

**12:00–13:00 Discussion**

**13:00–14:30 Lunch Break**

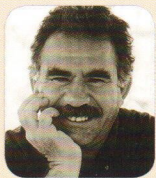
**15:00–17:00 Session VI**

## Democratic Modernity: Perspectives Ahead



**Moderation: Kerem Schamberger** is research fellow at the Department of Communication Studies and Media Research (IfKW) at LMU Munich. He also works at the Institute for Social-Ecological Economical Research. He is active in the Marxist left and spokesperson of the German Communist Party (DKP) in Munich.

We are discussing alternatives, but some movements have already started to build the future. In this session they are invited to present their theoretical ideas and practical projects for a better world.



**6.1 Abdullah Öcalan (Kurdistan)** is the founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Since his abduction in 1999, and under severe conditions of isolation at İmralı Island Prison, he has authored more than 10 books which have revolutionised Kurdish politics. He has written

extensively on history, philosophy and politics and is regarded as a key figure for a political solution of the Kurdish issue. He has contributed to the discussions on the quest for freedom and has coined democratic confederalism as a non-state political system. He is also the theorist of democratic modernity. His writings have been translated into 20 languages.



**6.2 Sonia López, Peoples' Congress (Colombia)** is a member of the Political Movement of Social and Popular Masses, a grass-roots organization in Arauca, Colombia, and represents the Congress of the Peoples (CdP). The CdP aims to build popular power, encouraging organisational

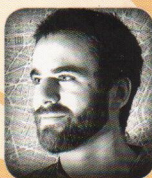
political processes that contribute to the strengthening of the popular bloc and committed to the defence of Human Rights. As well as participating in the conference, her aim is to meet and contact other organisations and exchange experiences of struggle, organisation and popular resistance.



**6.3 Fewza Yusuf (North Syrian Federation)**

is the co-president of Democratic Federation of Northern Syria. She is also a member of the committee that wrote the social contract. She has been actively struggling within the Kurdish freedom movement as well as Kurdish women's freedom

movement. She has a book written in Arabic called "An Opinion on Jineoloji".



**6.4 Quincy Saul, Ecosocialist Horizons**

(USA) is the author of "Truth and Dare: A Comic Book Curriculum for the End and the Beginning of the World," and editor of "Maroon the Implacable: The Collected Writings of Russell Maroon Shoatz." His articles have been published

by Telesur, Truthout, and Counterpunch, among others. He is a co-founder of Ecosocialist Horizons.



**6.5 Cassia Figueiredo Bechara, MST (Brazil)**

is a member of MST National Board of Direction. She started her life with MST in 2001, through a land occupation in Sao Paulo State. In 2005, she became an organic militant of MST, in the state of Pernambuco, Northeast Brazil.

Among her several tasks in the Movement she has been a member of MST State Direction Board in Pernambuco, organising camps, land occupations, political education courses. She has also been part of the National Coordination of MST Communication Sector. Today she coordinates MST International Relations Collective.

**6.6 Internationalists (Rojava)**

**17:00–18:00 Discussions**

**18:00–18:15 Closing Note**



**Hêvîn Tekin, JXK** finished high school in Berlin in 2016 and has been active in YXK/JXK for two years.