

Illegitimate legality – Illegitimate illegality

(The Voice, Berlin)

Legalization? Naja. Perhaps we should be more critical on the matter.

The idea behind legalization to be eurocentric. Moreover, it is for many Europeans and even many non-Europeans to be seen as the partial "humanitarian" solution to a serious human problem. But we should be more critical: if we were to look at the history of European "good intentions" from a historical perspective, I believe we would even stop using the term altogether, except for official usage, such as "humanitarian intervention", "humanitarian aid", "technical cooperation", and/or "free trade."

A very close friend of mine, living in the occupied territories, had a cartoon where you could see a man laying on his stomach, arms and legs extended. Above him, with one military-like boot pressed on to his back, you could see a person standing over, his hand reaching down to the man on the ground as if he wanted to help him stand up. The man, lying on the ground with the foot on his back, said, "I don't need your help. I want you to take your foot off my back."

So who can legalize who? And what exactly is to be "legalized"?

Can the United States military occupying Irak legalize or illegalize a portion of society? Can the torturers of Abu Ghraib determine which prisoners and which declarations are legal or illegal? Can the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund or the Club of Paris legalize or illegalize economic decisions made in Cameroon? Can the occupying Israeli army legalize or illegalize my movement in my country or even in territories that are supposedly under "Palestinian control"? Can a government responsible for modern day colonial terror determine whether those terrorized are legal or illegal? Whether our movements here in colonial Europe are legal or illegal?

In my country we say that you cannot go anywhere without first taking a step. In other words, we should first question what kind of history is meant-and defined by whom-when we talk about legalization. Most importantly, we must recognize Europe for what it is: an illegal and illegitimate social, political and economic construction based on genocide. This is not just theory.

The first question is fairly simple. There is a large group of people, pertaining to approximately 80% of the world, which has been historically and permanently placed into conditions which can only be qualified as unjust if not genocidal.

The past and present destruction of Africa, Asia, and Latin America has been in order to provide the conditions so that true precarity is always found elsewhere. In other words, the genocide committed throughout the world in the name of "progress", "modernity", "civilization", "democracy" or "humanitarianism" has provided the backbone for what is known as the European social system, the likes of which are unknown in almost all of the countries which violently produce refugees and migrants. Moreover, any attempt outside of Europe to provide the minimum social infrastructure has been brutally repressed, with the number of deaths going into the millions.

In my country we say that this system has destroyed humanity as such, in all parts of the world. But there are differences, and we must be careful with the attempts at superficial expressions of equality. Why? Because, although it is nice to hear that black, brown, blue, green, yellow and white all belong together, the whole European construct is based on speaking of equality while at the same time accepting historic and structural inequality as either inevitable or as something far outside of our range of personal influence. Yet when in Germany we cannot even go from one district to another, what legalization are we talking about and who are we waiting for to correct it for us?

It is difficult not to see the whole discussion on legalization in the light of the discussion within Germany regarding the possible inclusion or probable exclusion of Turkey from the European Union or the debate in this country about integration and Leitkultur. In other words, Europe can finance the extermination of the Kurds in Turkey, while at the same time demanding that it the country become so "civilized" as to fit into the European Leitkultur, to become "integrated" into the same system of collective exploitation, dehumanization and so-called "supremacy". With this in mind, do we think it would be "progress" to allow parts of Africa in to the European Union? Who would be considered more "civilized", the Europeans for "accepting" the Africans or the Africans for finally being "accepted" as part of Europe, or because the Africans would from then on see themselves as Europeans?

Which brings us to the point. The whole political construction is illegitimate and anti-humanity. No legitimacy can be derived from it, just as during the time of the so-called European "Enlightenment", where-correctly-the monarchies were not asked for pardon nor permission but instead declared illegitimate. In other words, it is not for the slave driver to determine my freedom or lack thereof, legal or illegal. The slave driver himself is illegitimate and therefore has no moral or legal power of determination, but instead derives his power from violence and

cheap persuasion. How could I, if I am to maintain any dignity whatsoever, ask him to pardon me? (Subcomandante Marcos-not to be confused with Caravan Markus-once asked the question, "Who is to ask for pardon from whom and why?")

Thus, it is a mistake to surrender our freedom to those who illegitimately maintain their power to decide over our lives, be it through legalization or illegalization. And then they expect us to ask them for pardon in order to "legalize" a few (and then only for a handful of economical "useful" non-Europeans who are then allowed to sit-though never as equals-at the table of the privileged.) Meanwhile, extermination and exploitation continue unabated-albeit with less resistance.

With so much horror surrounding us, we cannot permit ourselves to not take a clear position only to then later make a compromise with illegitimate sectors-or with sectors who have long ago taken the decision to protect consciousness and comfort through supposed ignorance and alleged superiority. We must clearly define what we want. Until we do so, we are going to be continuously pushed into debating things which even go against our own interests and which do not represent us, our interests nor those of the people we are fighting with and for.

Finally, I, would like to make a simple proposal to power and privilege: Stop the violence! There is a proverb in my country, which says that everybody wants peace, but that peace can only be achieved by fighting relentlessly and without compromise against death and destruction. Other people, of European origin, have used other words to describe something similar: As long as one person is imprisoned, I cannot be free (the European origin of no justice, no peace).

The only possible solution is to begin a true process of restitution with reparations and justice. Otherwise, the injustice and illegitimacy which began over 500 years ago with European colonialism will continue in all aspects, transformed and transmuted but with very little differences. This we can no longer permit. Especially those who thanks to the f spitting of blood and death by diarrhea of millions of others, they may live a life of privileged "precarity". So what do we want?

In my country we have a saying. It goes like this, don't leave for tomorrow what you can do today:

STOP THE VIOLENCE.

FORGET LEGALIZATION: NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!

GET YOUR FOOT OFF MY BACK!

NOW!!!!!!