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A Letter from Koridallos Prison

St. Mp.

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17/10/2022

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Contents

Note from the translators	5
A Letter from Prison from St. Mp.	6

I'm speaking out now. So that no one else finds themselves in the same situation. So that each of us can speak. To put an end to the fear.

St. Mp.

Koridallos prison for women

Note from the translators

We decided to spread this letter as a way to break the isolation of the prisoner, even if it's a minimal gesture that will only help to dispel the relative ignorance about her situation. We decided to translate this letter because we think it is necessary to change the parameters of a sparse conversation that thus far only has seen people become entrenched in their pre-existing loyalties (as friends/enemies or political allies/antagonists). Other people have to become involved, not to feed on the latest movement drama but to make a meaningful difference in their own context (which for some will also include this context).

When we hear stories of abuse far removed from our spaces, the condemnations are easily expressed, the blame and the causes clearly pointed out, everyone shouts "down with patriarchy." When the abusive behaviour arises in our close circles, the if's and but's are plentiful, ambiguities and nuance muddy the waters, patriarchy is seemingly not involved. This isn't the first time we hear of abuse inside the anarchist space, it won't be the last and we are tired of having discussions about whether this or that person has provided enough clues so we can consider them worthy of our support (and let's be honest, a support that stays very much on the sidelines). We are always almost as sad and shocked about the reaction of the direct surroundings before, during and after. We have to do better.

Apart from the slogans on demonstrations and the personal testimonies on indymedia, we have to be able to talk about and fight against the way patriarchal society also shapes our behaviour, our relationships, our thinking, our self. We don't have the answers, we don't stake a claim on the truth, we want to live, we don't want to merely survive in this oppressive society – let's start from there.

(TW: this text describes a violent episode)

A Letter from Prison from St. Mp.

17/10/2022

There are events that can mark a person's life forever. Events that can crush and terrify you to the point of having nightmares and being afraid to sleep; of wondering if you can trust people, since you have been betrayed by the person closest to you, your partner.

On May 1, 2020, I too experienced such an event, that I will never forget and will haunt me for the rest of my life.

After a very big fight with my partner, he beat me up, attacked me with a knife and hurt my leg. Our neighbors and my father called the police and the ambulance to report domestic violence. After the arrival and departure of the police (we didn't file a complaint because of our political beliefs) and the EMS (to provide first aid), the fight started again and escalated. My companion attacked me for the second time, aiming to kill me. I defended myself and my companion was injured after a confrontation between us. I called the EMS, he was taken to the hospital, where, unfortunately, he died as a result of internal bleeding from his injury; I was informed of this later, after my arrest, since the first assessment of the attending doctors was that he suffered a cardiac arrest.

It wasn't the first time we had an intense argument, but it was the first time he threatened me with a knife.

I had never discussed it because I always hoped it would be the last time, since it hadn't happened at the beginning of our relationship, only within the last year. I was confused about what connects us and what separates us, since we had spent 6 years of our life together. Because it's not easy to realize that you are a victim of violence, even if you think you can recognize it. Because I was afraid that nobody would believe me. And I am still afraid...

I was convicted of voluntary manslaughter in a calm mental state, even though both of us were under the influence of

drugs, as evidenced by our toxicology tests. Even though the court accepted the possibility that I was partially in a defensive position, I was sentenced in the first instance to 12 years for homicide and 3 months for possession of a weapon.

I am locked up for more than 2 years in the women's prison of Koridallos and I am trying to cope with the trauma of the physical violence I suffered, the psychological violence that followed because of the isolation and my exclusion, especially during the first year (I am not only referring to the conditions of the prison), but also to deal with the loss because of the death.

I have reached the point where, being in a defensive position and trying to defend myself, I am responsible for the death of a person, the death of my companion – and I am trying to accept all this. I am in a condition of confinement for an act that I never imagined, trying to face my nightmares and remorse on a daily basis.

I am still here, awaiting my second trial, hoping and asking for a conversion of my charge based on the actual events. Not necessarily a remission of sentence, as strange as it may seem. Because, in the end, what is violence and what is self-defense? For me it is a question of morals and principles.

I would like to tell all the women who find themselves in similar situations not to stay. Stop feeling guilty. Leave, no matter what the cost. Staying in a toxic, abusive relationship can have catastrophic consequences. What happened was terrible and should never have happened! These types of situations never have a happy ending.

Following the news, I see a new femicide happening every day and I wonder if we can build the conditions for all voices to be heard without fear. In order to see the real aspect of the violence that (not only) women suffer. So that violence stops being normalized and women's resistance to it stops being seen as irrational and marginalized.

It took me a long time to come to terms with what happened to me and regain some of my courage. That's one of the reasons