

# “In the midst of death, I am very close to life”, Mehmet Aksoy - A tribute

by The Region - 28/09/2017 18:45



When in Raqqa Mehmet once said that the night had “fallen on Raqqa.” In the early hours of September 26th it had fallen on our hearts and souls. A journalist faces many difficulties but none can be greater than to write the story of a colleague that has lost his life in search for truth.

Mehmet Aksoy, a most precious friend and a disciplined journalist, was killed outside the press office in Raqqa as the Islamic State carried out a heinous attack leaving many dead. There aren't enough words to describe his soul, his captivating presence would strike you in awe. When at a protest, or even a speech, his aura would occupy your soul. His diligence would inspire us all to live responsibly. When the sun rose he could be found editing a film, and when most were preparing to sleep, he would be deciphering the secret relationship between the Kurdish liberation movement and the key to emancipating humanity. He had two weapons: his camera and his smile. His presence was enough to fill the entire office with warmth. When we started the

journey of The Region, with him as a founding member, he inspired us with his enthusiasm and dedication to bring voice to the unheard.

He was not just a friend, colleague, or comrade. He was everything The Region yearns to be. He was a universalist, a humanist, an internationalist and a vehicle of contagious love. It bears repeating again, he concerned himself with nothing less than the whole universe. Maybe this was because of his upbringing.

Mehmet was born in 1985 in one of the small villages of North Kurdistan in Kürecik/Malatya. He did not get to grow up in his home country as he was the son of a Kurdish family fleeing the Turkish war on the Kurds. Like many migrants, he grew up in the working class quarters of London and lived through the challenges of being uprooted. Who was he and what did it mean to be a Kurd?

It was a question he asked with those he grew up with, the brave progeny of those who walked for miles and crossed seas to live amongst the British working class. His parents went from humble and remained so, owning an off-license store in Luton. It was here where Mehmet would learn to embody the universal and emancipatory visions of all the revolutionary traditions that converged into his childhood. When he walked into a second-hand bookshop in 2002 he came across “Blood in my Eye”, a book by the Black Panther George Jackson, who helped him to understand the intersectionality of struggles and situate his own identity in a greater context. It was his further readings of Marx and Lenin that politicised him, and most importantly, the ideas of Abdullah Öcalan, the ideological father of the Kurdish Liberation Movement, who gave him the purpose to wage his struggle for humanity. Following Öcalan’s words of “Truth is love and love is a free life” Mehmet wanted to embrace the undisclosed human stories in the midst of war and revolution. “In the midst of death, I am very close to life” he once said, and there would have been no other place that he would have liked to have been.

Before he passed, he wrote a poem for those who yearn for him.

“Just look at the stars

You will see me there

At the bend of the Milky Way

Where galaxies meet each other.”

A tribute on behalf of the editorial board of the Region and its friends