

GETTING HEARD

An essay about 'A Voice for the Voiceless' by Ruined Conflict

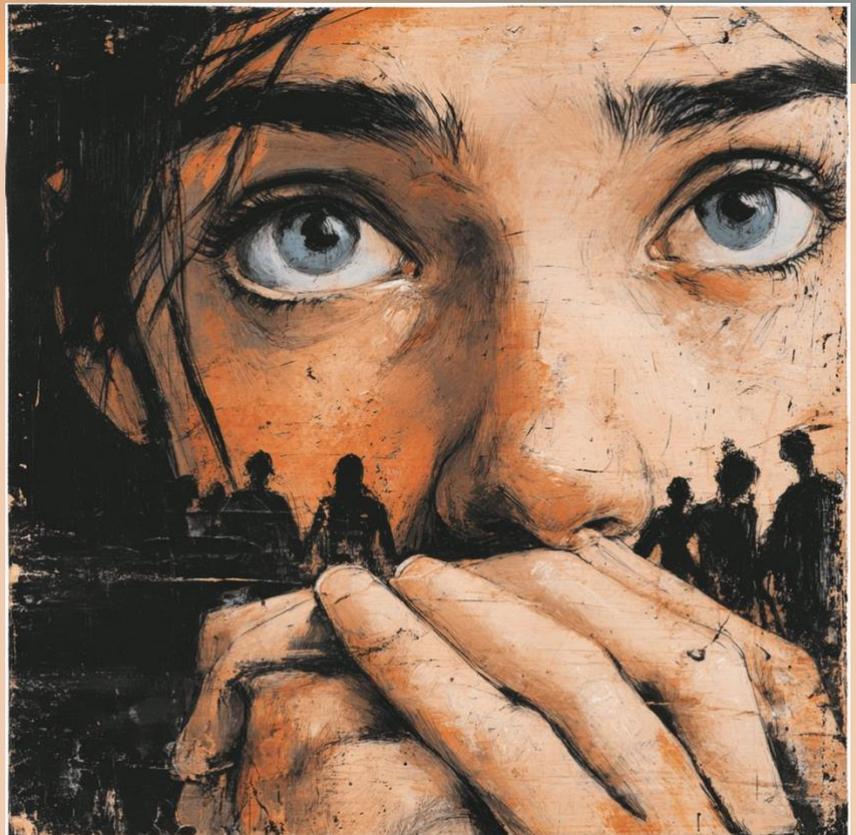
It is Friday morning and for the first time in weeks I can do a workout in peace. What is more, my favourite podcast is also being released today. The first minutes introduce a discussion with a pastor. Although I do not belong to a church myself, I listen to the inspiring conversation and run.

After a few kilometres and a stop at the riverside as I simply marvelled at the morning atmosphere, I learnt many things about Berlin, belonging, religion and what it means to be a voice for others who cannot be one themselves. The focus is on those who no longer have a home, who live on the margins of our society. The podcast ends far too quickly and I switch to my usual playlist.

From the very first song, I felt transported back to the theatre stage at Amphi 2024 (or WGT 2025). Xavier Morales and Eric Holzer took to the stage and filled the hall with their immense presence. Vibrating sounds lead into a scene of anger and empowerment. 'I don't wanna be a victim.' The song begins with these words and my steps match the rhythm. The song is strong, its message of central importance, especially in a society like the one we live in today.

It tells of injustice, corruption, war and how hatred meets hatred before all the injustice is consumed in a devastating fire. But it also tells of how the lyrical self does not want to live in a 'ruined baseland'. Well, who would want that? I assume that we all want the best, the most beautiful, the greatest. Just without restrictions and ideally not at our own expense. To get rich, but without working, please. To be successful, but without having to work hard to get there. To have more power, but of course in such a way that others have less of it.

Of course, that is just as wrong as claiming that everything is going to ruin today. We live in times we might not want to live in, and yet there are many positive movements that are increasing visibility, such as *Black Lives Matter*, *Fridays for Future* or local groups like *HAZ queer*. Towards more togetherness and solidarity. When Ruined Conflict sing: *Hate versus*



hate / Gays versus straights, at least here in some parts of society, a broadening one at that, a breaking up of the old structures is visible. Of course, opposing movements are also visible, for example in the country that used to belong to Austria. And yet there were probably more people there than ever before at that Pride march in Budapest. That gives me hope that there are people who are not simply indifferent to all the things the song talks about, that they are committed to making our world a better place and are not just living in the moment, but fighting for the moment.

I find myself thinking about which side of the argument I am on. A friend has recently asked me if I wanted to join one of the countless charitable organisations. I said I wanted to find out first. Although that was my intention, I did inform myself and then closed the tab again at some point. I could not bring myself to actively do anything. Of course, I told myself, I have this blog on which I publish texts that a few people read and perhaps feel inspired to examine their attitude or feel confirmed in it.

But I remain in my position and tell myself that I already do a lot in my daily work as a teacher. I give my students the opportunity to develop an attitude instead of simply adopting one. I set an example, I want to be tolerant and show solidarity, I want to do the right thing. And yet I stay in my little world, which sometimes seems very bright and fun-filled to me. I am happy, I am allowed to live a little regardless of the norm, and yet I usually only practise 'limited rebellion' (Thomas Rainer, 2019). That is also part of the job, I think to myself.

And yet, when I listen more closely to the chorus, I feel admonished that this simply must not be enough:

*We need a voice for the voiceless
A future for the brave
[...]
A light of fulfillment
A passage to outland
Living for the moment
Stars to lead the way.*

I do not want to be a star, that would be too distant and cold for me. But stars are the instrument that seafarers and travellers have used for orientation since time immemorial. Today there are more modern means. Perhaps there are also more modern ways to help those who are unable to do so. Social media could create such stars - but there should be a whole sea of light, not just individual stars. The 'light of fulfillment' does not (only) represent a possible spiritual awakening, but that society as a whole finds a way that could lead to less injustice, war, corruption and hatred.

These are all hopeful prospects, but perhaps a better future is initially reserved for the courageous. Those who remain discouraged run the risk of becoming victims of a time that often seems merciless. This makes it all the more important to take courage and stand up for those whose voices are too quiet. So we need to take courage and stand up and speak out for others. I have realised that it is no longer enough to live comfortably in my position. I nod to myself, even a little, to give myself courage. So who or what is 'the evil' that I want to, should, must fight?

I cannot fight an evil that can't be asleep.

And there it is again, this hopelessness. Whatever I call evil, I am sure it is not at rest. And is it not this hopelessness that prevents us from doing good, from wanting to change something, from opposing those who are part of the masses? Of course it is useful to move a large mass and thus achieve more. But I would also like to set myself apart from the current 'big crowd', which I feel is following too closely without thinking along with it. However, this path tends to be a lonelier one, one that requires great courage. To muster this courage requires courage in itself - and strength. I believe I have this.

So I start up my computer again and decide to do something. But I still need to instil a little courage in myself musically, so I start Ruined Conflict again: *A voice to heal ahead/A path that leads to wonders*. It's about healing as a society, as a world, then miracles are (more) possible again. I open my messages and click on the link that a friend recently sent me: 'Support us.' it says. I start to complete in the form:

I don't want to be a victim.