Komun Academy
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Many people and movements recently struggled to make sense of the United States' tactical alliance with the Kurdish people in the fight against ISIS. "How could a revolutionary movement allow itself to be co-opted by imperialism today?", they wondered. Much of these analyses however derive from dogmatic approaches with little concern for the people and dynamics on the ground and little knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and society. For the sake of outdated theories, they refuse to stand in solidarity with revolutionary forces in war-torn regions and thus demonstrate their lack of faith in the possibility of socialism's victory. Another problematic phenomenon in the global left is the tendency to analyze reactionary authoritarian states such as Iran, Turkey or Syria as "anti-imperialist" due to their temporary feuds with the United States.

What does it mean to be anti-imperialist today? Is it enough to fixate on opposing only one center of Empire? How can we prevent repeating the errors of state socialism when building concrete solutions to people's needs? Can we envision a global, liberationist paradigm for democracy?

This is a slightly edited version of a two-part interview from 2017 by Firat News Agency reporter Berfîn Bağdu with Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) Executive Council member Rıza Altun about imperialism and capitalism and their manifestations in the Middle East crisis. The detailed interview also explains the PKK's approach to realsocialism and socialism, and the movement's change of paradigm.

Revolutionary movements and people around the world, especially in Europe and Latin America, watch the PKK and Rojava with growing interest. However, most of them cannot make sense of the relationship between the US-led international coalition and the socialist and anti-imperialist identity of the Kurdish movement after Kobanê. Isn't this a contradiction in your point of view? Or is it a temporary situation that arose due to the political, ideological and sociological besiegement and isolation of the Kurds? What is your explanation for this?

To understand the current political situation, one needs to know how it developed in the first place. The recent developments are not results of political relationships based on planned strategic and tactical relations. Rather, they should be evaluated and seen in terms of political and tactical outcomes of particular political situations, as well as of people's active struggle and resistance.

When the latest crisis in the Middle East emerged, the PKK already had a 40-years history of struggle. This struggle was

essentially against the imperialist-capitalist system embodied by colonialist states that control four parts of Kurdistan in the name of the capitalist and imperialist system. For exactly forty years, these states supported the imperialist and capitalist colonialist powers and tried everything to suppress the freedom movement.

The international conspiracy against our leader (Abdullah Öcalan) is a result of the efforts by these powers, a systemic approach to eliminate our movement. At the start of the Middle East crisis, their approach was to exclude our movement to suppress and eventually destroy it. This approach was based on the relationship and alliance of the imperialist and colonialist powers. We can see this when we look at what happened in Syria. When the chaos in Syria erupted, many circles in the name of the Syrian opposition developed relationships with international imperialism and regional colonialist powers. The circles around the Kurdish freedom movement were the only side to mount resistance to defend themselves with no connection with any state. There was no support for them from any power.

When some powers that deepened the Syrian crisis, such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, targeted Kurds through their proxies, our people started resistance in accordance with the ideas of our leader Apo, Abdullah Öcalan. The Syrian regime and the so-called Syrian opposition tried everything in their power to suppress this resistance. Kurds then responded when organizations like ISIS, Al-Nusra, Ahrar Al-Sham, etc. attacked the majority Kurdish regions with the support of the Assad regime. This is how it all started.

When this battle and the resistance started, Turkey, Iran, Syria and other similar powers were supporting the Salafist, extremist terror groups that were attacking the Kurds in Syria. Other powers, particularly the US and Israel were also supporting these groups. They were developing projects and forced these groups to act in accordance with their interests.

The Salafist groups attacked Kurds with these states' support and this continued until the resistance in Kobanê. Kobanê was a turning point. Until the resistance in Kobanê there was no single regional or international power that supported the Kurdish freedom movement in Syria. There was no power that developed even a tactical relation with the Kurds. They collectively did everything they could to eliminate the Kurdish movement. Iran acted together with the Syrian regime to crush Kurdish resistance. On the other hand, the US and Israel tried to suppress the resistance by supporting Salafist groups with various policies through Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Kobanê was the turning point of the struggle.

The powers that wanted to dominate the Middle East through ISIS, pursued a very deliberate and relentless policy. They followed the same strategy as Genghis Khan or Tamerlane (Timur), which helped them conquer the entire Middle East in a short period of time: unlimited violence and savagery. When ISIS beheaded people in front of cameras and published their atrocities, it wasn't out of primitive barbarism. Rather, these actions were a result of their strategy to create a climate of panic and fear, to make people surrender. After the first massacres, the fear spread by ISIS arrived before ISIS itself, so that towns and cities were handed to them without any resistance. The first resistance against ISIS took place in Şengal (Sinjar). PKK guerrillas and YPG-YPJ fighters in Rojava mounted the first and only resistance against ISIS when latter's gangs attacked the Ezidi people there. Although they have an enormous military power, the US, Russia and EU countries simply watched the massacre unfold; the PKK's HPG and YJA Star guerrillas along with YPG-YPJ fighters saved hundreds of thousands of Ezidis, Christians and Muslims from genocide.

The resistance in Şengal gave breath to the world and made people question the situation beyond the climate of panic and fear. They asked "Despite their enormous military power, why don't the US, EU and other global and regional powers

revealed a serious level in this regard. Its achievements have led to a focus of interest in socialist revolutionary movements in the region. A big interest has emerged on an international level. It is also very important that individuals from all over the world, who are really struggling for freedom come and participate. But it should not be limited to this. When we look at the results that this paradigm has created, it is necessary to create an International in which all the forces of the region and the world can coordinate their struggle.

them in Kurdistan. But it is a great misconception to take the paradigm of the leadership as a paradigm that is reduced to the Kurdish community, which only stands for the Kurdish society and its liberation. On the contrary, this paradigm is a paradigm that does not distinguish between one or another ethnic societal structure and which is not valuing any social identity as less important than the other.

This is the socialist paradigm which is necessary to be developed primarily in the Middle East and then in the entire world on an internationalist basis. Naturally, the principal areas of this paradigm are to be associated with one another and need to continuously support each other and overcome its errors. For example, now when capitalism is in crisis it is not acceptable that the libertarian movements around the world are so fragmented. Therefore, it is inevitable to establish a cooperation of anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist forces. We should even expand the spectrum. Against global capitalism we should build up global democracy.

Capitalism is no longer able to sustain itself. The world hegemony of imperialism is cracking, it can´t go on. If it can somehow sustain itself today, it stems from the fact that the line of freedom is not able to express itself adequately, and that it doesn´t organize and does not transform itself into struggle. As the world capitalist system is organized around a center, the forces of freedom need to create an internationalist unity based on democracy. Without this, it is not possible to end capitalism and imperialism. On this topic there is already experience from the past. We must consider these experiences. The experiences of the First, Second and Third International are, despite their many insufficiencies important. This is even more valid for today.

A paradigm without a universal character cannot be socialist. Therefore, we think there is an urgent need for a liberationist International. And there are some promising developments. Especially the Rojava revolution has despite of its shortcomings

act against this atrocity? Do they try to benefit from this barbarism?" The new situation put the legitimacy of international powers and regional states up for discussion, while generating prestige for the PKK and our leader Öcalan. It destroyed the "terrorist organization" label which was stuck on the name of our movement by Turkish colonialism and imperialism. After this, no one could carry on with their relations with ISIS or similar organizations. Especially the countries that define themselves as "democratic states" had to search for new tendencies to continue their existence in the region.

However, despite the resistance in Şengal and its results, regional powers like Turkey continued with their policy towards ISIS and other Salafist organizations. They later diverted ISIS to Kobanê and tried to secure its fall into ISIS' hands. The goal was to destroy the gains of Rojava's Kurds, but most importantly the gains of the freedom path in the Middle East. This served everybody's interest at the time. The regime and its indirect international supporters were looking to benefit from this, in addition to Turkey and Saudi Arabia. ISIS built a tactical and strategic relationship via the anti-Kurdish approach of these powers. This is how the attack against Kobanê developed.

Despite it all, a great resistance was put up against the attack on Kobanê and this resistance was embraced by the people in all four parts of Kurdistan. All the Kurds in Northern, Southern and Eastern Kurdistan showed great sensibility towards Kobanê. The longevity of the resistance increased the interest of people of the region and international public opinion. After 100 days of resistance Kobanê was on the top of the agenda in the world. After Kobanê was on the world's agenda, the failure of ISIS caused a split. At that point, the regional and global powers re-evaluated their political and military positions and started a new process on their part. The Kurdish resistance in Kobanê, Rojava created new circumstances. The international community and public opinion created pressure on the US and other international powers to interfere in the situation. The re-

sistance mounted in Şengal, and after that in Kobanê, moved the conscience of international community.

The relationship between the US-led coalition and the YPG was seen as as legitimate and necessary as the alliance between the US and Soviet Union against Hitler's fascism at the time of World War II. Both sides needed that kind of relationship just like the US and the Soviets did back then. Thus, a tactical relationship was developed with the US against ISIS.

It is more important to see how this relationship developed and what the intentions of the parties in this relationship are, than to reach a conclusion by only determining the ideological positions of the parties. Otherwise, for forty years the US has been fighting against the PKK and the PKK is fighting against the imperialist system in the body of colonialism. But there is a new situation and chaos in the Middle East that concerns the world system. There is not only the oppressed peoples' and socialist movements' struggle against imperialist powers in this chaotic situation. There are also struggles between imperialist powers themselves, or between imperialist powers and regional powers or local reactionary tendencies. This struggle creates opportunities in which all parties can get into tactical relationships while moving forward to reach their objectives. Therefore, every party tries to do this as they benefit from the power and capabilities of others. Various political and military positions make this possible.

At the beginning of the crisis in the Middle East, the US faced several options after the political and military investments it had made in Syria through Turkey and Saudi Arabia, resulted in nothing. The first option was to leave Syria, i.e. to leave the region. Doing so, the US would back down from its politics of world domination. The US wouldn't possibly be able to do so. The second option was to invest more in the policies that it pursued towards Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which were, however, failing. This would not result in a different outcome either. The third option was to move further by developing a relationship

lem politically, socially, organizationally and practically, based on this paradigm.

Let's say; In northern Kurdistan, there are forces struggling against colonialism in Turkey. In Rojava there is the YPG-YPJ. There are also several forces in east and south Kurdistan. Because they are advocates of the same paradigm, it is only natural that they relate to each other systematically. We must see the paradigm as a common basis. The paradigm allows every political, social, ethnic, cultural sector and women to develop self-governance based on their own freedom and equality. Everyone is free to decide and to vote in his own sector. There are also common problems that involve all these sectors and areas. Everybody has the right to speak out their own will. This is a legal situation. But more importantly, a moral one. With morally I mean, that no person or section of society is dominated by another and is deprived of its freedom and will.

All the topics which are connected to women´s liberation and organization are like that. We can say that this paradigm has a dimension of women´s freedom. The women have recognized their freedom coming from that paradigm and created a synthesis of socialism and women´s liberation based on female identity. As you can see, the women´s movement has become a very important force. In the guerrilla war in northern Kurdistan, the woman has evolved into a great power of freedom and organization. The YPJ is a force that impresses the world. Rojava has also revealed an ideological, organizational, and combative force that could stop a savage force such as ISIS. Now you can take all the formations in the region in this context. You can handle also the ecologist movements and various other movements on this basis.

In short, it is necessary to look at the paradigm that the leader Apo has developed not only as a paradigm for Kurds and the freedom of Kurdistan. The PKK and the PYD are movements which aim at a concrete revolution in Kurdistan. Therefore, the leadership paradigm is a fundamental guideline for

Syrian Democratic Forces (QSD). They all have their substructures und suborganizations, too. Is this the form of practice of the model of socialism which Mr. Öcalan is suggesting? If there are all these distinct organizations what´s their role and function and how do they relate, also in the context of law?

This needs to be discussed in detail, but we can put out some general facts. Now we're talking about a paradigm. Our leadership has developed a paradigm. It isn´t a paradigm which is focused on a special region or a special societal formation. It's more of a universal socialist paradigm. We use the concept of world socialism. First, the paradigm needs to be grasped this way. While our leadership developed this paradigm, he also revealed a new paradigm through the critique of realsocialism. He created a new paradigm of socialism. Now, you must not see this paradigm as a paradigm that only belongs to one organization. It is always possible that many forces base themselves on this paradigm and adapt it to their area, their region and their own problems. This is what universality means.

This paradigm is not only for the Kurds and it is not only for the Middle East. We need to take it as valid everywhere in the world and give it a chance to be put in practice in all places. If we´re looking for example at Rojava, there is the PYD, the YPG and the YPJ. Now the PYD and the YPG are working especially on the problems of the Kurds in Syria. But they´re not just limiting themselves to the Kurds. They´re basically trying to solve the Kurdish question, but they aren´t ignorant of the universal character of the problem.

Therefore, both the thought and the practical-organizational structure also carries universality. They are not PKK, the PYD and the YPG are not PKK. But they are Kurdish forces which are grounded in the paradigm of the democratic autonomy. In Eastern Kurdistan, there is another force, in Southern Kurdistan and in Northern Kurdistan also, this is the paradigm's approach. Everyone is struggling by formulating their own prob-

with a new force that proved its success on the ground. This third one was the choice that the US had to make.

Instead of continuing with Turkey and Saudi Arabia and repeating a previous practice by fighting against this freedom force that had achieved success, the US chose to become a partner with the success this resistance revealed, which would obviously benefit itself too. This was a crafty imperialist approach which attempted to attribute any gains to itself. The US calculated this very well when it developed a tactical relationship.

The US started a process based on supporting the resistance of YPG forces as an approach of the international coalition against ISIS. Of course, the freedom struggle of the Kurds in Rojava is based on freedom and equality on a socialist basis. It is the expression of a political path based on the fraternity and unity of peoples. On the other side, the imperialists are fighting to impose their hegemony over the Middle East. These very different strategic and ideological positions entered a merely tactical relationship in Kobanê. The other developments that followed can be seen as a continuation of this tactical relationship.

In itself, this relationship is a very painful one. On one side the freedom movement is trying to extend its territory and leads a struggle to create a free Middle East by developing democratic solutions, while the other side tries to extend its hegemony in the Middle East. This is not a relationship in which the parties support each other, but instead are in constant conflict.

Can we say that this is a very rare situation, maybe the first of its kind? Is there a tactical partnership that arises from the intersection of the interests of oppressed peoples' forces and hegemonic imperialistic powers?

Maybe in the Middle East this is the first of its kind, but it's not something that's unheard of in the world. If we look at the history of struggles for freedom, we can find a lot of exam-

ples. There are some examples in late history, especially during World War I and II and in the Soviet revolution period.

The Soviets and the US saw the common points of their struggle against fascism during World War II. Now when we evaluate this, how can we define the position of the Soviet Union? Would we say that the Soviet Union collaborated with imperialism after evaluating its relations with the US or the UK? This would be a very shallow and dogmatic approach.

There are several examples from the October Revolution as well. After the October Revolution, economic and political agreements happened with the capitalists and imperialists. If you look at the nature of these agreements, there is no denial of socialism on the Soviet part. There is no denial of socialism when Lenin developed relationships with imperialists. The same thing goes for the agreements made during World War II. Here, one can talk about the necessity of developing tactical and strategic relationships and agreements for the October Revolution. Yet the struggle against fascism during World War II required the creation of an anti-fascist common front.

How long will these relationships last?

If we look closely, these kinds of relationships are limited to the period of any given problems' existence. That means they are not at the level of constituting strategic relationships. Just like how the agreements of the October Revolutions came out of conjunctional situations and just like how these agreements become worthless when the conjunctional situation was over, the same happened during World War II.

The alliance that developed during World War II was an anti-fascist stance, which emerged from the Soviet Union's desire to defend its territory under intense attacks, combined with the interests of other anti-Nazi powers. This agreement remained in place as long as fascist attacks continued. But once fascism was defeated, all parties returned to their own political positions and moved on in accordance with their respective ideological-political path.

Emirates and other states. So, you can see that the nation-state has brought limitless domination, exploitation and oppression. Because it's a system that's been set up accordingly. It is not possible to create freedom based on such a system and by using the tools of such a system.

If a nation-state society is dominated by a belief group or ethnicity it won´t recognize the right of existence of the other groups. The Arab sphere, the Persian sphere und the Turkish sphere doesn´t accept the right of existence of the Kurds. Shiite to Sunni and Sunni to Shiite mutually disrespect the right of existence of the other. States built on monotheistic religions do not recognize the right to life of other religions. It's a system that's built on mutual destruction. Now, if one enters this Middle East, with the old state argument, and the old nation argument, it means entering chaos with new massacre force. This can´t be socialism! This isn´t socialism. What is socialism? Socialism means thoroughly investigating the structures on which capitalism is based and creating an alternative against those.

If we take socialism as our basis and think that in socialism there is no place for oppression and domination and instead put the primacy on freedom with equality; if we believe that the state is a means of domination and exploitation, then all the concepts and models we can develop must be congruent to our thoughts. Socialism can´t be built though somebody's destruction. The democratic nation must be thought of as the freedom of all fundamental factors that form a society and as a concept that is based on equality. This is a concept that transcends the nation-state. It's a concept where all the liberties that socialism needs are best expressed.

In your movement exists the PKK, KCK, PAJK, KJK, HPG, and in all parts of Kurdistan there are organizations like for example in Rojava, there is the PYD, TEV-DEM, KONGRA-STAR, YPG, YPJ and in Northern Syria even the Syrian Democratic Council und the

If we look at the particularities of the Middle East this becomes clearer. In the Middle East, there isn´t one society with a monistic character. Middle Eastern societies are all intertwined. It is not possible to separate societies along religious, sectarian, ethnic or cultural criteria. Maybe the societies can define the regions over which they have control as a form of nation and work with this definition. But even if it is so, it will never be possible to speak of one nation. In that sense, the most appropriate form of social construction in the Middle East is the concept of Democratic Nation. This concept emphasizes both the cultural and democratic character of the nation's construction, as well as the cultural dimension of the nations built on a democratic fundament and expresses equal and free life. The capitalist monopolism and its organic prolongation, the nation-state, are rejected, and the construction of a life based on socialism and communalism is suggested.

Therefore, it is necessary to solve the existing problems and to put forth a paradigm that transcends the nation-state to build socialist life. Without a paradigm which transcends the nation-state, it is neither possible to be socialist, nor to solve any problem of society. The state is not a mechanism invented by socialism. Likewise, the nation cannot be a mechanism on which to build up socialism. However, it is necessary to redefine the nation as a social form and integrate it with socialism. This is what the PKK's leadership did. So, the concept and construction of the democratic nation is the best social form which expresses the liberties that socialism promises. There will be a community in which everyone expresses themselves freely, where differences can live together, the differences organize and express themselves and respect the existence of others.

We can discuss this model in two ways. When we look at the nation state, there are all sorts of evils in the Middle East, such as war, chaos, hegemony, exploitation. You can see it very well, when you look at the fascist regime in Turkey, the Arab

There are not many examples of this in the Middle East. This is the first of its kind, and a unique situation. The conflict and the struggle in the world can be read as World War III. The Middle East is one of the most affected territories of the global conflict. This means that we may witness some developments that we have never seen before in the region. For example, we may witness complicated tactical and strategic relationships of the regional status-quoist states, international imperialism and socialist revolutionary movements, which all act to strengthen their positions. Because the reality on the ground is very complicated. There are three main courses.

The first is the imperialist course and involves big powers. This is represented by the US, Russia and the European Union states. The second course is defined by the regional status-quoist states. These are represented by countries like Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. The third course is that of socialism, democracy and freedom. This is represented by leftist and socialist popular movements, such as the PKK. These three courses are in conflict with each other and among themselves, especially the first two ones. Therefore, these forces can continuously develop different relationships and alliances in accordance with the priority of their interests and conflicts. Every power positions itself open to relations and alliances while conflicting with each other. Our definition of "World War III" is based on this reality. When we predicate on this definition of World War III, we will see various new strategic, tactical relations. When this is the case, many powers are supposed to develop tactical relationships to move forward to their strategic goals, although it may look contradictory. This goes for everybody. This is within the nature of politics and diplomacy. This should be expected. Therefore, making judgments by looking at the open political and military situations might be too shallow and narrow of an approach.

Taking the right approach means this: Capitalism is in a deep and structural crisis. It's a global crisis, which can be felt in-

tensely in the Middle East. The conflict in the Middle East is taking place at both the military and political level. Therefore, an ideological and political approach alone is not enough. An organized and military position is needed at the same time. When you take an organized and military position, that means you will constantly fight against the status quo in order to change and transform it and develop a new structure. This is a practical process. If it's not evaluated correctly and the dialectics of the progress are not implemented in a good way, dogmatic approaches may result in one's elimination. In that case, a situation where the line of freedom cannot be expressed may emerge.

Because of this, we need to know and analyse the field very well. We have to be precise when we decide when and what to do against something. When we make gains or capture a place, we must evaluate carefully how it will be defended and how it will be used to build and establish socialism. If we don't look at it from this perspective, we will never be able to understand the freedom path or the positions of regional status-quoist states and international imperialism. If we mix all these with each other and stand apart with our theoretical approaches, acting as though we are great defenders of freedom, while remaining without the power to influence, we will in reality gravely harm the struggle and resistance of the people.

These are tactical relationships, this is understandable. Now the Federation of Northern Syria and Rojava forces have relations with the US and Russia. These are great imperialist powers. How can one protect socialist identity when having political, military and economic relations with those powers?

Firstly, I have to tell you this: Our struggle is carried out by carefully considering the historical experiences of other struggles for freedom. You have to take this into consideration. Secondly, there is no way that someone will understand us from realsocialism's point of view. From the practices of realsocialor socialist circles. Ethnic nationalists get angry with us because we are against the state, which is a tool that will carry their own ethnic identity to power and help them dominate over others. On the other hand, real-socialists think that they can solve the issues of freedom and equality by becoming a state. As if refusing to be a state means denying socialism and nation.

However, the state is a fundamental institution that massacres both. No socialist libertarian can politically express themselves through a state. The state is nothing but enmity towards freedom and equality. Freedom and state can never co-exist. Therefore, we need to put the state aside in the first place. We must separate the concepts of nation and state from one another. The nation can be accepted as a social format. I mean it can be accepted without being a part of a nation-state. But we need to define nation very carefully. We must understand what nation is.

The nation is a social form. But we are talking about a society with diverse cultures, faith groups and opinions. Society is made up of diversities and their unity. We can't make a definition of nation that denies diversities and relies on one single ethnic identity, belief and ideology. This will result in a massacre of all diversities. This is not freedom. Therefore, it is necessary to define and create the society without damaging the existing democratic structure within societies´ nature. Democratic nation is the real formation of nation. The Democratic Nation is the true form of becoming a nation. Every undemocratic social formation and construction is problematic and goes against the nature of society, which eventually results in continuous violence and conflict. The societal entities that make up the nation can only be held together through a democratic administration system based on democratic politics. Democracy is a regime that gives tremendous opportunities for everyone to express, organize and manage themselves.

The major problem of real-socialism was not having developed a deep analysis of state and nation while formulating of socialist paradigm against capitalism. It evaluated nation as an ethnic fact rather than a cultural expression and considered state as an irreplaceable home for nations. It didn´t point out the relationship between the construction of nation by the state on an ethnic basis and the wheels of capitalist exploitation. This situation emerged more clearly after the collapse of real socialism. Conflating freedom with state and trying to overcome this through the nation state-model by coalescing with the social form, was a very big mistake. The realsocialist model tried this for about 70–80 years. It couldn't help but become a part of capitalist system in the end.

If we focus on this issue, we can see that nation-state and freedom cannot co-exist. The state system is a political system, which is against liberties. States will never produce freedom. For sure they won´t. On the other hand, the nation is a formation, which has well defined borders and carries various social, ethnic and religious identities. Since the nation term contains all of these, it cannot be singular. In the nation-state system, the state is a tool of exploitation and hegemony while the nation completes it as a system of monism basing on a single ethnic, religious or ideological structure. In other words, it bases itself on the assimilation and destruction of social diversities. This model must exist for an all-out exploitation to continue. Capitalism lives on this.

It creates a regime of massacre though the hegemony of state and nationalist monism. When realsocialism emerged as an alternative to the capitalist system, it couldn't go beyond the paradigm of the nation-state and its system. Its approach on these terms was almost copied from capitalism. Now we see that this term is a problematic one. You can't define a socialist identity without reassessing the nation-state term and putting forward an alternative to it. When we say that we don't want a state everybody finds it odd, including those from nationalist

ism, we know that we cannot carry out a freedom struggle by polarizing the world in the form of fronts and defining ourselves within one of these. The world is not in that state and it's not possible to carry out a freedom struggle by isolating and marginalising yourself within the world's capitalist system. We have to see the problem as a whole and act accordingly.

We are living in a capitalist world system. We want to create an area of freedom to struggle against capitalism, imperialism and colonialism. Now we have no opportunity to position ourselves in an existing area of freedom. We want to create one inside this world, which is held captive and enslaved. The freedom areas that we want to create are now under other powers' control. But the social and political groups have very serious discrepancies among themselves. We can only move forward in the name of socialist idealism by benefiting from these conflicts and discrepancies. Creating polarization and taking position in it is not for the benefit of socialist powers.

If we approach the problems with realsocialism's understanding of polarization, we will have to face all imperialist and colonialist powers. But in reality, the imperialist and colonialist powers are not homogenous. There are various contradictions and discrepancies between them. A failure to benefit from these conflicts and to gather strength and positions in the name of socialist ideas will be a great loss for the socialist ideology.

If we look at the issue by only differentiating the socialists and capitalists-imperialists, we will be left with only a few whom we can call friends on the ground. And with a compilation of these "friends" it will be very difficult to move forward in this great struggle. When there is an opportunity, everything we take from the capitalist-imperialist system will make the socialist movement stronger while making them weaker.

When this is the case, we need to move forward with the necessities drawn by our ideological and political approaches

by organizing and opening areas of freedom. There are hegemonic powers, which are in relation with the capitalist system, in front of us and they control those areas. And we have to open a space for ourselves in these areas.

When we look at the reality of the Middle East, there is no certain area of freedom or a certain free group. All areas have been lost throughout history. The society has been melted within the existing capitalist world system. Countries and regions are invaded by colonialist and imperialist hegemonic powers. The path of freedom for the society is closed under the name of state sovereignty.

Kurds are developing a freedom struggle under these circumstances. We are trying to create an area for freedom within the social reality which is denied by imperialism and the four colonialist countries (Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria). We need to move forward with very carefully calculated steps and approaches. Taking all powers against us by saying "this is imperialist", "that is colonialist and capitalist" will mean accepting defeat. That means risking the elimination of the freedom struggle.

So, what needs to be done? We need to know how to create ourselves from nothing by analysing the military, political and social reality of these areas. When you act this way, confronting various powers, developing tactical relations and getting into military and political relations will be inevitable. The important thing is to stick to the ideological, political line and freedom approach. You need to be sure that all of these will serve your objectives. Those, who are carrying out the freedom struggle, must take this reality into consideration and express themselves within this context.

Now there is a freedom struggle that we have been developing. If you look at the history of our struggle you will see that there have been plenty of difficulties and experiences. For more than 40 years, the capitalist and imperialist system of the world united against our struggle for freedom. They supported

lapse and defeat of realsocialism. There is no possibility for the development for anti-imperialist, socialist, libertarian and anti-system movements if they don't question themselves in this regard. We need to see the consequences of confining our fate to such a failure when we are looking at those who collapsed alongside realsocialism. The PKK managed to regenerate itself after assessing the situation correctly and criticizing realsocialism. It didn't create its entity and power by disengaging from socialism, on the contrary it made this possible with socialist philosophy, ideology and life. Only with this, the PKK managed to become an ideological and political power in the Middle East.

Let us talk about the democratic nation concept. We know that imperialism envisions a new world order which will go beyond the current national identity and nation-state. A new world government or a new world state, which will exceed nations, is being talked about. Is democratic nation an alternative to this? Or does it correspond to it?

Capitalism's social formation is based on the nation-state form. When we talk about the nation-state, it always has a capitalist form. This means building a hegemonic system over the nation category which is a social form and turning into a field of violence and exploitation through capitalist monopolism. Here the main problem is the creation of the nation through the state. This nation category is very elastic and transitive. Through the creation of this category the state tried to homogenize society. This means that all different expressions of society and culture are going through a de facto genocide.

Therefore, creating a nation on a capitalist basis and converting it into an area of hegemony means creating a huge social problem. Now the most basic problem of realsocialism appears here. Its greatest mistake is to think that it could move forward and reach freedom through the most central elements and arguments of capitalism.

In addition to that, it cannot define the relationship between ecology and society from an ideological stance. This is a very serious situation.

Is the approach of real socialism problematic? Indeed, it is. Its defense of an unlimited industrialism, its perspective putting industry and development on the same page and defining the human being as a hegemonic power against nature are serious ideological problems. You cannot think of socialism without ecology. You cannot think of life without ecology. If you relate socialism with life you can understand its relationship with ecology better.

This also goes for the line of women's liberation. Capitalism turned women into a commodity and an object. Capitalism imposes the ugliest things on women. The male dominant mindset is experiencing its most intense form in the capitalist system. Now without thinking about the freedom, salvation and position of women in society and without defining this in the context of socialism, it's not possible to save the world or to achieve equality, freedom and democracy. The freedom issue of women is too deep, it's not possible to resolve it with the realsocialist approach that says: "when the revolution comes the problem of the women will be resolved". It is more than that. It should be evaluated as the basic problem of socialism or even as the primary problem of life in broader terms. Those who do not develop a unique approach for the freedom of women have a weakness in their socialist understanding.

What comes when we think all this together? It becomes clear, how rough and ineffective the approaches of realsocialism were for the construction of socialism. It´s obvious that philosophical, ideological and political gaps led to the destruction of socialism. With its change of paradigm, the PKK addresses these problems, it finds solutions and reconstructs socialism based on a new and real social science.

This is not a disengagement from socialism. This means bringing a true meaning to socialism by examining the col-

the colonialist powers and made great investments to prevent the rise of a freedom movement. Despite that, a great struggle has been developed solely with the people's support. The struggle was embraced by the people. This freedom approach, which is embraced by the Kurdish society, had a huge influence on the Middle East and the struggle found a place for itself within the conjuncture. Although the world was against it, the existence of a movement, which is based on guerrilla warfare, democratic politics and the organization of people, led to incredible results.

Furthermore, this movement had the ability to move on without active support of organizations that call themselves "defenders of freedom" or "anti-system". Most leftist fractions had concerns over our movement and thus didn't support it at all.

Today, there is a chaos in the Middle East. The chaos is also partly a result of the 40-year struggle by our movement. This chaos turned the Middle East upside down. A new Middle East has emerged where the policies of international and imperialist powers went bankrupt. Those who assumed that capitalism or imperialism would be very powerful have been rendered weak. The chaos in the Middle East swallowed them all and now they became invisible. Likewise, the structure of the regional powers and the hegemony of the status-quoist states have collapsed.

So how did this happen? You could explain this with the crisis of the system or maybe by way of historical conflicts. But that's not enough. The system's crisis or historical conflicts should be triggered by a struggle and intervention before it's transformed into chaos. The forty-year-old freedom struggle of the PKK has a share in the rise of the chaos in the Middle East and the collapse of the system.

Now everyone is struggling to recreate and re-position themselves in the Middle East. This is very important. We must see this. The center of the crisis of capitalist modernity is in the Middle East right now. Either capitalism will recreate itself in the Middle East and prolong its life for another

hundred or more years or the chaos in the Middle East will open a crack within the capitalist modernity system, in the same region where freedom once emerged. This is why all the world's powers are now in the Middle East and fight each other there. It would be a very shallow approach to explain this solely in terms of a "war for oil".

Our region is the territory where the current depression of the world capitalist system turned into World War III. Everybody is here now. The struggle here is ideological, political and systematic. Global imperialism wants to develop a post-modern world hegemony and system through this struggle. The regional status-quoist states are trying to protect their gains and advantages that were provided to them by the system of the 20th century. The oppressed peoples and societal circles are trying to create their freedom and equality out of this chaos. This is what's happening in fact in Rojava right now.

But what do they rely on when developing these relationships? Is it possible to build a socialist society in northern Syria or in the Middle East despite American, Russian and European imperialism?

When we look at the previous progress of the crisis in the Middle East, there is no liberationist line anywhere. There is none in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt or the Gulf States. Because the chaos was progressing mainly as the re-establishment of capitalist modernity and conflicts of imperialist and colonialist powers. There was no political order or organization that expressed freedom. The people's search for freedom and their efforts were destroyed by those powers because it was not organized. But when the crisis came to Rojava, a new situation emerged based on the path of freedom. The new situation is exactly what emerged from the struggle of the PYD and YPG/YPJ. For the first time, a democratic, libertarian and socialist political line emerged in the Middle East against capitalist modernity. Because of this, all united to crush this

libertarian manner. It's not difficult to find this in human history and apply it to the actual situation. This can be derived from the equalitarian and libertarian life that societies keep alive even under the circumstances of capitalism and imperialism.

The most modern meanings that are attributed to democracy were present in the natural society and they are the characteristics of communal life. Therefore, democracy can be an actual term for an equalitarian and libertarian administration model. We are using this term with this meaning.

To express it more clearly, we are using the term democracy as an administration model of our socialist understanding. This is not a democracy term that is based on the state. We are using it to define the self-governance of society. This is not different from socialism or a disengagement from socialism. On the contrary it aims to bring a new meaning to socialism or to establish a system of socialism. The same can be said for all the other terms. Without a criticism of socialism, we couldn't have brought socialism to a point where it can be put into practice in life on real terms.

Ecology is also important. From the perspective of the capitalist world order or the classical socialist approach, the relationship between nature and society is problematic. Capitalism made the world an intolerable place with its obsession with industrialism and profit. Humanity is on the verge of annihilation. When we are facing such a threat, taking socialism as a utopia based on abstract freedom and equality does not mean anything. Socialism should have an approach to save the world and humanity. In that regard, it should have an ideological approach to stop the damages caused by capitalism to the world. But there is no such thing in realsocialism. There is only a general statement which says that capitalism exploits nature and the environment.

Yet, realsocialism can't save itself from being a part of ecological destruction with its nation-statist, industrialist approach.

These are not terms that exist despite socialism. Socialism stands there as a general term. You can say that these terms add to the content of socialism. For example, there is a distortion of democracy when you look at it from a liberal capitalistic or realsocialist point of view. They are distorting the democracy term. How do they express democracy? They are expressing it as a method of governance. Looking at democracy this way is a great delusion, a deception. Putting state and democracy side by side is never possible. Democracy can be expressed as the self-governing model of societies before the state.

How was the society organized before civilization emerged and when people didn't need a state? People had their self-governance forms that were not based on exploitation, oppression and invasion. They were based on means of democratic self-administration. Democracy should better be defined this way. While societies were ruled democratically in those times, the liberal view of history denied it. It presents democracy as an invention of civilization. The structures of class, urban and state civilizations also used the concept of democracy to cover exploitation and domination which they perform on society.

We cannot talk about a democratic state, or a democratic government within a class-based system. This is a deception. If we take socialism as a reference, we must define a term for the socialist governance approach. There are terms for real socialism's governance models. Marxists for example use the term "proletarian dictatorship". They also use the term state as a basic element within socialist literature. They suggest class-hegemony as a governance model. They define democracy as an administration method of a state. This way they turn democracy into the passive form of an administrative method within the system of statecraft, although it was used by human societies for a significant period in history as a decisive form of self-governance beyond state. This is a problematic situation. If we say that we are socialists, first the socialist governance approach should be expressed and conceptualized in the most

struggle that was embraced by the Middle East and the world. However, they ended up developing relationships with what they couldn't eliminate.

What needs to be done in this position? For sure, those who are fighting a freedom struggle should believe in themselves in the first place. If they need and believe in their ideology, in socialism, in freedom and in social equality, they shouldn't hesitate to develop relations with anyone.

This question of yours is just like the destiny of the Middle East. If some are fighting a freedom struggle and some others are trying to make their own interests dominant, then these parties will inevitably go through a process of both, relationship and contradiction, of negotiation and struggle. It has to be like this, it could not be otherwise. It can be in the form of consensus and alliance or conflict. For example, the US had to develop a tactical relationship with YPG, a force in which it showed no interest in the beginning. But the US is trying every way to remove YPG's socialist identity and integrate it into the capitalist-imperialist system. This is one of its primary objectives when developing a relationship. But the Kurds and the political line of freedom have its own objectives in this relationship. It's important to determine who is advancing with whose horse.

I mean the results achieved in this relationship are of strategical and tactical importance for both sides. The positions obtained by the Kurds of Rojava and the forces of the Northern Syria Federation are strategic gains for all socialist and anti-system forces. But the US' presence in Syria only has a quantitative importance with regard to the imperialist system. Without a doubt, these tactical relationships are important for them. We know for sure that these relationships will be in a constantly conflicting manner. But the movement in Rojava has confidence in itself and it is achieving favourable results.

Now there is a coalition in Syria, which is represented by the US. It has all the support of capitalism. There is also another

front of this system, Russia. And Russia has a lot of support behind it. With the presence of Russia and the US, all hegemonic and imperialist powers of the world are represented in the Middle East. And regional states are in a position of relation and contradiction between these two points. While these powers are trying to impose the dominance of the imperialist world system, they are conflicting with each other as they try to impose their own hegemony as an absolute hegemony.

Under these circumstances, there is now an area of freedom in a small piece of land, called Rojava, where a democratic communal area has been formed. We are talking about an area of freedom for the first time. With all material and moral support of the society, this force continues its fight. Meanwhile it wants to establish itself by resisting through ideological, political and economic means against all the might of the world's capitalist system.

We have to think about what this area of freedom means to those, who defend freedom. There is an imperialist, capitalist approach that wants to destroy this area completely. There is a burden coming with it. On the other hand, there is a struggle to expand this area. We have to understand this conflict and discrepancy very well. We can't understand this discrepancy without understanding the conflict.

Then forces on the ground have to take advantage of relationships with Russia and the US. If we only look at the way these relationships are handled, it's possible to understand the problem.

You talked about the strategic approach of the international powers. What's Russia's approach?

In Russia's strategic approach we see that it wants to enter Syria as a regional power. Who is supporting Russia? Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Syria. Russia wants to establish itself by influencing other states in the Middle East. What's its basic strategic objective? It wants to bring a nation-state character to the Syrian regime and wants to turn it into a hegemonic power. We

fore the captivity of our leader. The insistence on women's freedom and efforts for a democratic resolution through ceasefires are an expression of this search.

Instead of questioning a dissolved realsocialism and taking a novel approach on behalf of the oppressed, questioning those who want to create a novel approach out of the dissolution is a severe problem. What we mean here is that the contents of our approach are not questioned and understood; still the basis of realsocialism is seen as socialism by many. The new PKK's change of paradigm is not based on a denial of socialism. I want to especially underline this. This is a new situation based on a criticism of real socialism's ideological, philosophical and political approaches. There is an effort to redefine socialism with a more libertarian, equalitarian and democratic approach. Therefore, the PKK didn't give up on socialism.

On the contrary, we are constructing a new socialism based on the criticism of realsocialism, especially through the critiques of anti-system movements. All the terms that we use are developed through a criticism of realsocialism. We must see these as the libertarian, equalitarian and democratic terms of the new socialism. The war in the Middle East and relations developed on this basis cannot be explained with ideological schemes. The power and self-confidence created by the change of paradigm gave the PKK an advantage to face the new crisis in the Middle East. If it hadn't changed its paradigm, it would have continued to resist but it wouldn't have a chance to win. With the confidence that the paradigm change has created, it gained an advantage, which makes it possible to achieve more serious results.

The terminology you use mentions the terms of democracy, democratic nation, freedom of women, environment and ecology more than socialism. Do you give new meanings to these terms apart from their traditional meanings? Do you replace socialism with these terms?

groups think that the PKK gave up the socialist struggle. Did the PKK do so with its change of paradigm?

The PKK was a socialist movement from the start. But when you look at that time and the historical conditions, it was under an intense influence of realsocialism. There were also effects of national liberation movements, especially the struggles in Vietnam, guerrilla warfare in Latin America, the Chinese revolution and national movements in Africa. Therefore, the origin of the PKK is both socialist and national liberationist. But when you look at the situation of the world and ideological dominance of the time, the PKK was formed under the influence of realsocialism. The PKK carried out a long national liberation struggle with these characteristics.

But after the fall of the eastern bloc and the integration of the states created by national liberation movements into the capitalist system, we had to question this situation. We questioned both realsocialism and national liberation. If we look closely, the collapse of realsocialism and integration of national liberation struggles came with the collapse of various libertarian movements. That was a total defeat. The PKK suffered from the consequences of this process. And during this process, he PKK faced an attack unlike other socialist and national liberation movements. The imperialist system targeted the PKK as the first step of its intervention in the Middle East. They tried to leave the PKK without a head and ideology by capturing our leader through an international plot.

That the PKK didn't fall apart is because the PKK is distinct from the realsocialist andtnational liberation movements. Although it bears the effects of realsocialism, it holds unique characteristics. And this is not only ideologically, but also organizationally the case. The belief and organizational model which is unique to Middle East's historically conscious societies was the main reason why the PKK was not dissolved. Our leader's captivity revealed new circumstances for the PKK. There already existed a search for a new ideological and political concept be-

don't see any approach, which evokes democracy, equality or freedom, or any approach, which will help to solve problems by democratic means.

Of course, while manifesting this approach, Russia develops a concept after evaluating the daily discrepancies with its allies. It pursues a policy of integrating the areas of freedom led by the Kurds to system of the regime, to the nation-state. It uses its military, political and diplomatic power towards this end. But on the other hand, those, who carry out the freedom struggle evaluate this power's situation and try to move forward over the cracks. This relation is very problematic as a result. Russia is in relation with Turkey, Iran and Syria and it wants to integrate the freedom movement to the regime. But despite that, our freedom movement tries to progress in military, economic, political and diplomatic aspects by taking advantage of the cracks in the relations between them.

We talked about Russia... What is the strategic approach of the US?

A similar situation also goes for the US. Is the US comfortable with the PYD's political line of freedom? I don't think that the US is comfortable with the declaration of the cantons or the establishment of a self-governance system instead of a state or the efforts for the creation of an equal, free society. The US sees those as a conjunctural situation and ignores them. It wants to achieve military victories through tactical relationships. But on the other hand, it develops strategic and prudential relationships with regional states. Therefore, taking a position against the US without seeing the anti-imperialist character of the tactical relationship is like playing into the hands of the system of hegemonic power.

There is no relationship with the US other than a tactical, political and military relationship. The dominant economic model based on monopolism is not in power in Rojava. There is no place for monopolies there. Rojava is aspiring towards an equalitarian, democratic system. We can easily see this in

the federal constitution. A democratic society and democratic politics are being organized.

In economic terms, the establishment of a communal society is the main objective. Therefore, an anti-exploitation and anti-monopoly legislation is being prepared. At this level, there is no tactical and strategic alliance with Russia, the US or any other capitalist, imperialist power. On the contrary, a very different worldview is imposed on them. The effort is made to show them that another world is possible. But the capitalist system rejects it and tries to integrate this into the nation-state in order to destroy this alternative before it is born.

Russia and the US have great military might and political power. They have an obvious superiority over your power; we can talk about an asymmetric power situation here. What are your advantages against these two fronts? Do you have any ideological, political and social advantages?

Of course, in some aspects, we have advantage over them. Developments in various realms prove this. First of all, the Middle East is where civilization was born. By civilization, I mean the period that starts with the rise of classed society until the establishment of the capitalist system. We are talking about a process where humanitarian values were destroyed and corrupted. The society is desperate and hopeless because of that. The current chaos is also the result of this. The society is in a great search for freedom, which is where we have advantage over them. In general, our socialist ideology, which can be an answer to society's search for freedom, is our advantage against imperialism and colonialism.

In the Middle East there are immense problems that are based on ethnic, religious, and sectarian divisions, class, and sexism. The system of civilization and its last product — the capitalist system — is the creator of these problems. We are offering solutions to these problems, which are compatible with the history and culture of the peoples in the Middle East.

the world system politics developed after WW I, which saw the Kurds as fair game.

Again, the nation-statism, nationalist and religious approaches in the region with their murderous character would have won. But that didn't happen here. The Kurds came together on the basis of their own ethnic and cultural identities and fought in these two places. Again, dominant powers wanted to destroy the forty-year-old socialist and libertarian line of the PKK movement. But in fact, Kurdishness and the democratic, libertarian and socialist line are now intertwined organically. This is the line which brings victory to Kurdishness – not primitive nationalism. After the dissolution of realsocialism, it is the struggle of the Kurds and other revolutionary forces in the region, which show themselves in the struggle of Rojava, that gives a new value and reputation to socialist identity and ideology.

If Kobanê had fallen, if the Şengal massacre had been completed, there would be no nothing left for this line of freedom. Either we would have managed to be a torch promising freedom to the world, or we would be destroyed. The price for this situation and its value was high. In both areas, success was achieved. And this achievement paved the way for the freedom and ethnic-cultural identity of the Kurds. If Kurds are consulted in policy-making today it is because of these two places. A Kurdish line, which is denying those two places cannot be successful. Those who want to use Kurdishness and reject those two places will at once be dismantled as opportunists and will suffer defeat. But those who realize the depth and virtue of the line of these two victories can sustain themselves.

After the Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured in 1999, there was a change of paradigm on your side. Does this have an influence on the relations you have developed with the US and Russia? If you hadn't changed your paradigm, would it still be possible for you to develop relations with the US and Russia? A lot of

conquer Kobanê and finish off the Kurds, finish off freedom, or be defeated and come to an end. After all, the winners in Kobanê became a great force in the Middle East.

After the victory of Kobanê, no one was able to stop the countdown to the end of ISIS. A month later, after it was defeated in Kobanê, it suffered defeat in Til Ebyad, ten days later in the mountains of Abduleziz. It was a series of victories against ISIS that grew from Hesekê, Eyn al Isa and finally to Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor. The same goes for Iraq, too. One needs not to be deceived by the publicity and propaganda of the inflated world imperialist powers. When ISIS came to Iraq, this country and state with its rich resources could not resist an hour in front of ISIS. ISIS entered from the Syrian border and took the city of Mosul at once.

ISIS stormed from Mosul to the Iranian border in two days, and stopped at the gates of Baghdad. On the other hand, it stretched up to the Jordanian border. This whole conquest took a total of three to five days. No power could stand in the face of it. Neither the international coalition of the United States, nor the hegemonic powers in the region, nor Iran was able to stand in the face of it. Iran was unable to stop ISIS, even with the support of Hezbollah forces and the forces of Jerusalem.

ISIS was stopped in Şengal, and it was broken in Kobanê. ISIS was led on to commit a great massacre in Şengal against the Êzîdî people. The Kurdish nationalist parties, which were from the beginning of the massacre in relationship with ISIS, disarmed the people and ran away. The people were left alone facing the massacre. Until the PKK guerillas from the mountains and the YPG/YPJ forces from Rojava reached Şengal, tens of thousands of people had been slaughtered. But when these forces reached Şengal, the massacres were stopped. After stopping the massacre, ISIS forces were continuously driven back. If we had lost those areas, there would be no Kurds today. We wouldn´t be able to speak in the name of the Kurds and the Kurds would have been liquidated. This would be the result of

In fact, we link socialist thought with the experiences that are present in our people's history and cultural life. That makes our ideas attractive.

Also, we have forty years of history as a movement. This is a history, which is dedicated to equality, freedom, justice and the solidarity of peoples. Therefore, all parts of society trust this movement, which has similar characteristics to the movements of prophets in terms of devotion. We are expressing this tradition with socialism today.

If a correct ideological, political and organizational approach is manifested, it is always possible to become an efficient power in the Middle East. We proved this right in the region. A lot of defenders of freedom proved this throughout history. We made this rise in Kurdistan, in four parts of Kurdistan. But after that, Rojava emerged as a very advanced situation. This is important for us. It's obvious that if the right approach is manifested, you will achieve concrete results here.

Secondly and most importantly, peoples and societies are directly involved in the struggle. Until now, the society's participation in conflicts, in struggles was limited. The society was either the victim or the oppressed side of the conflict between ruling powers. But especially in the Northern Syria Federation, all fractions of society are actively involved in politics, military and organizational efforts now. Now the imperialist and colonialist powers have very limited capability to agitate one social group against another and create war between them. The new ways in which society expresses itself within this framework has led to the rise of a new center and a new social field. This is the most important advantage that we have over them.

For example, now we can talk about the Federation of Northern Syria, the Cizire Canton or another canton. When we just talk about this we may not realize how important it is. But being a federation or a canton is not a simple situation. What does this mean? This means creating an island in the middle of an ocean. This is impossible to understand for those, who do not

envision the enemy. It's not possible to understand this if one does not feel and experience freedom. We say that an attempt to understand the situation with shallow political evaluations will lead to nothing but demagogy.

Then what's rising here in Rojava? What is rising in Kobanê and Afrin? And as a whole, what does the Federation of Northern Syria mean? When we think about these, we realize that in these areas the movement didn't only answer people's search for freedom but also that areas to live freely have been created. These areas of freedom start to appear as small islands. And these islands come together and try to form a federation in order to avoid getting marginalised. They are also trying to reach universal status by uniting with the international revolutionary movement.

We should see that capitalism is left without solution against its own structural crisis and the hegemonic structures have a lot of discrepancies. These, along with the chaos, give the revolutionary powers a great advantage. Therefore, people's search for freedom, humanity's longing for a re-attainment of human identity and this longing's results in the Middle East and Rojava provide opportunities more than enough for the freedom struggle to develop.

In some western countries, especially in Latin America, the Syrian and Iranian regimes are considered as anti-imperialist. Recently Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has also started using anti-Americanist and anti-EU rhetoric. What lays beneath the anti-Americanism of these states? Are they really anti-imperialist or can we say that this is a result of an inner struggle of colonialist powers?

There are several movements in the west that we can call anti-system. We have got to acknowledge this. Historically, there have been movements and currents that indeed led freedom struggles. Now these are very immense powers against the system, we must see this for sure. And Latin

It is very important to analyze why all the reactionary powers of the world and the region directed ISIS against the Kurds, right when its full victory was close. Two places are important in the face of such a brutal attack: first Şengal and then Kobanê. These where the places where the Kurds and the freedom line were to be liquidated. The reactionaries of the region had issued a Fatwa against our freedom movement and the Kurds.

When the PKK is liquidated, both the socialist freedom Line will be liquidated, and the Kurds will be liquidated. Therefore, the most barbaric form of the Middle East, which emerged in this conjuncture, has guided the world's most reactionary ideological power, against the Kurds in Şengal and in Kobanê. But both places became successes for our freedom movement and the Kurds.

If the Kurds want to sustain their existence, they must resist against that; if the line of socialism is to succeed, it must resist against that. For that, the PKK and YPG/YPJ defended the place, with all means necessary. This was a struggle for existence and freedom; either it would be won, or we would have been annihilated. The achievements of the struggle carried out in both places caused the Kurdish identity to become a fundamental factor in the world's conjuncture.

Can you name a coherent, victorious force in the Middle East and around the world in the struggle against ISIS? Could you say that "Iraq was successful in this way, Iran in that way, Syria, America…?" Of course not. None of them have any properties other than to claim a part of the success of the struggle and resistance on the ground against ISIS and to feed on it.

There is only one line that we can say that has defeated ISIS in this area: the PKK-leadership line and versions of the PKK line in the Middle East. Only they fought a very deep-rooted fight against ISIS, truly resisted and gained success. See what happened in Kobanê? The Kurds have officially defeated ISIS in Kobanê. In Kobanê, a rupture occurred within ISIS and it was defeated. ISIS mobilized all its power there. It would either

been appropriate to say, "Let America die in the Middle East, let´s die together." Well, if we'd agreed to die together with the United States' hegemony in the region, without a doubt, the socialist movement would not have gained much. Now there's an equation created by the developments. One must not interpret it incorrectly.

America has come to this point of political bankruptcy. But we need to see the death warrant for those who have fought for freedom. Who's giving the death warrant? Everyone except the Kurds, who resisted there. Well, the freedom forces there would stand up with their limited possibilities against everyone. So, there are two options: either I will put up total resistance, get annihilated and go down like that in the history books, or I can pursue a policy and tactical alliances and come out with a victory.

ISIS engaged in a strategic attack on the Kurds. Now, let's just walk through the logic. While ISIS was in such an effective position and situation that nobody in the Middle East could keep them from conquering 60% of Iraq over night, that it had the power to overthrow Iraqi and Syrian regimes, then one must ask why ISIS didn´t finish his campaign? Why did they strategically attack Kurdistan, especially Cizîrê and Kobanê? If they had targeted the Syrian state, or the Iraqi state, they would have destroyed both states overnight. We are talking about the same force that made Raqqa its capital in one night and conquered Mosul with its hundreds of thousands soldiers there. It spread terror and everyone who heard their name fled.

It becomes clear that these developments were not only connected to the influence of ISIS alone. The Gulf countries that heard the name of ISIS and even Jordan were ready to flee. But ISIS didn´t do that. It directed itself against the Kurds especially the Rojava Kurds. This is the indication that ISIS is not an independent Salafist actor. It shows that it acted in relation with the hegemonic forces of the world and the region, moving according to their strategic and tactical relations.

America is an important center. Guerrilla warfare of socialist movements in the 1960s have been an important front of revolutionary struggle. But they have had their own problems, too. For example, in the west, the anti-system movements look very detached, marginal and isolated from each other. There are serious issues with how they handle ideological, political and organizational problems. They have problems with converting themselves into anti-system and libertarian movements, while struggling to determine the real ideological, political and military anti-system movements. They can't express the foresight to develop an identity.

Take any random movement in the west and we can accurately criticize it. For example, when we evaluate the 150 years of history of Marxism, we see that it mainly resulted in realsocialism. The reality of realsocialism can be discussed in various dimensions. Of course, Marxism is an expression of an anti-system stance. It's a turning point against the hegemony and it reflects a background of a hundred or a hundred and fifty years. No one can deny this. But in the end, we must question it if a freedom path transforms into realsocialism and thus gets into a position in which it becomes fresh blood for the system. Now, with the realsocialist perspective, it's neither possible to hold a libertarian line, nor to evaluate an existing line of victory correctly and support it. Similarly, when we look at anarchism, the differences between wings of anarchism are mainly quantitative. There is no fundamental difference between them. Philosophically, its approach to freedom, equality and its stance against power created a valuable accumulation. But because they don't manifest this accumulation in ideology, struggle, resistance and organizational aspects, they can't get a foothold in society to represent the line of victory. And because they can't do this, they treat all the struggles developed somewhere else in the world from their own equation, approach and sense.

Despite all the radical discourse, they cannot free themselves from the capitalist system's lifestyle and way of relations. This is a very important problem for the freedom front. You can add feminist and ecologist fractions to this front.

When we look at their stance, although they look like they are against the system, there is a huge backlash and there is serious dogmatism. There is serious political self-abstraction. Isolating oneself from everything can only mean self-destruction.

The same thing goes for Latin America. Latin America has been through critical periods in history. It carried out struggles against Spanish and Portuguese colonialism, US imperialism. Especially in the 60s, it led a struggle for socialism, to which it later contributed with guerrilla warfare. We must give them their credit. But if we look at the situation now, we can see that there is a fundamental problem. Socialism cannot be built with the tools of capitalism.

For example, we can explicitly say that those, who act on behalf of socialism now do not go beyond realsocialism. If they base themselves mainly on a nation-statist and pro-power approach, it will never be possible for them to reach a true line of socialism. The problem of the anti-system movements in Europe and Latin America originates from here.

Their approach is this: "whoever is against the system is anti-capitalist". But anti-capitalism has its own criteria. There are countries that represent capitalism and imperialism, while yet being enemies. Such people are deluded to think that simply denying the creation of any relationships with those countries is enough to express one's revolutionary stance. They are mistaken in their belief that this is the definition of freedom. But when we look at their lives, we can see that they are living capitalism or imperialism itself. They are living in the system's cities, under its power, with its identity and within its market. They are living with it up to their chins and are yet in a delusion of being libertarian. There is something wrong here. We know that this was the problem with realsocialism. Such peo-

Those who bring the failed policies of US imperialism in the Middle East to the point of collapse are their local allies, their collaborators and their policies, or even the US policies. They steered their policies into a vicious cycle and are condemned to their own liquidation. They had two options, to leave like in Vietnam, or to be forced into an unexpected relationship. For the world hegemon, leaving would have meant surrender.

Since they didn´t surrender, they were forced to engage in an unexpected relationship. But there is a comparable situation for the PYD. If the freedom struggle that was indeed developed by the Kurds had been properly grasped by the anti-globalists and the anti-imperialist powers and therefore everyone had been more focused at this point, the freedom line would have been much purer, much more visible. It could have become ten times more dominant than today.

But because everyone had a very anxious, skeptical approach and preferred to isolate oneself rather than putting oneself in danger, because they decided not to see the political and ideological meaning of the opening of a space of freedom in Rojava, the revolutionaries on the ground were pushed towards the necessity of unwanted tactical alliances to keep on existing within the hell of the Middle East. What does that look like? This is like the deal that Lenin made with the capitalists to save the October Revolution in the Soviet Union. This is like Stalin fighting against fascism, albeit not wanting to fight the imperialist front.

You said the United States came to the point of collapse. Can we say that the United States has been trying to recreate their existence in the region based on the consequences of the Kobanê resistance? Can we indicate that a collapsed America has been given the possibility of re-entering the field with the resistance?

Undoubtedly, not the reactionary and dogmatic approach, but the correct political approach is in support of the victory of a socialist movement. I wonder if in such a case it should have

to liquidate the line of freedom in Rojava, and in fact that´s why they stick to the politics of a rotten, corrupt KDP line that has been constantly defeated, nourishing the idea of nationstatism and nationalism. Part of this strategy is to use Turkey as leverage against the Kurds of Rojava. While supporting Turkey in the fight against the PKK, they try to weaken the Öcalanline in Rojava. They say, "You won´t be comfortable without moving away from the PKK line". This is the policy of moving the Rojava Revolution from the socialist line and integrating it into the liberal world system. At the moment, this relationship is working up to a point. It will go as far as it can. But new political developments can always reveal new situations. This is not a situation that America is very fond of. It's the same for northern Syrian forces. There is a necessity in terms of both sides. The USA is forced into this situation by the policies of its allies in the Middle East.

But the problem is not just about politics; Neither the United States nor its allies can take the lead in the Middle East with the old approach and policies. A new world and a new Middle East is being born. To insist on the old, doesn't mean anything but to row against the tide of history. But the United States, although they are more flexible, cannot undergo radical changes of policy. Therefore, they try to make their allies, like Turkey and Saudi Arabia reflect on their situation. They say "While I'm out in my tactical relationship, you're putting me under pressure, be patient". But things aren't working out the way they think. No matter how tactical the American issue is today, if this tactical relationship was severed, there would be no alternative force to endure. So, it seems very difficult for this tactical relationship to turn into a conflict in a brief period, as there is not the smallest force to express its presence locally.

Both the policies of regional powers and Turkey's approaches are pushing for it. The current situation is nobody's preference, it is a necessity which has emerged. But it is necessary to assess the emergence of this need as well.

ple are ignorant to think it's possible to build socialism with the basic tools of capitalism.

Most of the anti-system movements are turning a blind eye to the captivity of their minds within this system and are deceiving themselves with their ideologies and dogmas about being anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist. These movements are taking stances without thinking about what's going on in the Middle East, what historical and sociological factors there are, or what the relationship between themselves and global powers actually look like. This is a great tragedy.

In fact, they should think about the global imperialist system by including its sub-units, the nation states. They should understand that the contradictions among them result from the strive for exploitation and hegemony, not for equality, freedom or justice. Those powers cannot be positioned against one another in ideological aspects. Only people and revolutionary socialist movements and social segments can be positioned against them.

Now when we look at the Latin American reality, I will not deny its anti-imperialist character. We never had any objection against a line of democracy struggles against imperialism. But we need to look at what they were able to achieve.

We must analyze how the realsocialism of Latin America in its antiimperialist struggle fell into the trap of anti-Americanism. We must discuss that when we look at the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalistic discourses of those, who wage the struggle for socialism in Latin America. We must understand whether their ideological approach is against a global system or whether it is just following a line of local agendas so that their actual policy turns into anti-Americanism. It is anti-American for sure. But anti-Americanism doesn't mean anti-imperialism. America is imperialist. It is of course possible to develop a stance against American imperialism. But being anti-imperialist is another thing. Being anti-imperialist means being against the capitalist world order, against the hegemony

of imperialism in the world and against the sub-hegemonic centers of imperialism. Saying "I am against the US" does not mean anything in this sense. This is the point where Latin American socialism stands currently. They are against the US and made huge gains in their struggle, but they also have relations with sub-hegemonic countries which are associated with imperialism. This caused a very undesirable situation. Western European capitalism is also an expression of imperialism. The revolutionism of Latin America should take the anti-American stance to a level that will include all of Western imperialism. They are facing a very serious problem because of this. It's not logical to say that the imperialism, which doesn't attack me, is fine.

Imperialism is a main stream which organizes itself in various centers. Without standing against all of them it's possible to defeat one of them. Because of this approach, anti-Americanism has never been able to achieve a victory for Latin America. It cannot bring victory because it did not transform into anti-imperialism. Therefore, although they made gains against the Portuguese first and the Spanish later, they could not break their relationship of dependency.

The guerrilla wars on behalf of socialism didn't achieve the desired results. Why? We need to question this. The main reason is the inadequacy of the approach. This will become clearer if we look at tangible examples. If one is to look closely, it is necessary to acknowledge that anti-Americanism brought this result. We speak of the sub-hegemons of the imperialist world system. Every place where there is a nation-state hegemony also constitutes a region of sub-hegemony of imperialism. Exploitation is a sub-hegemonial area. We cannot separate this from imperialism. Every focus which is organized within the capitalist world system as a nation-state is a sub-unit of imperialism. And every exploitative, colonial power expresses a sub-unit of imperialist hegemony. Based on this, imperialism has become a world system. If we look at the antiimperialist un-

to ally with the forces they didn´t want, which they even had tried to destroy by helping Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Nobody wants to see this. So, did the YPG or the PYD beg the Americans, 'They're killing us, come and save us, and we're ready to surrender to you in all its dimensions'? Did they say anything like that? No. Although there was no such rhetoric, it was imperative for the United States to engage in a tactical relationship with these forces. The USA was forced to do that.

The United States did not have any other option in such a situation. In addition, the United States wanted to participate in a successful fight against ISIS. While this relationship brought serious prestige and a strengthening of position to the United States, the YPG got some material support for their freedom struggle. The United States won prestige in both the worldwide public opinion and the public opinion within the United States in the fight against ISIS in Kobanê. The tactical relationships with this force continued and new areas were opened up. Today, the East of Euphrates is a field where much is won in the freedom struggle. America has created through this tactical alliance legitimacy for its presence in the Middle East and got a new opportunity to get a hold in the Middle East. But one thing must be understood correctly.

The presence of the United States in Syria is not just about Syria. It is not for the exploitation of Northern Syria and to obtain great material gains from there. It is difficult for anyone to create gains from a devastated Syria. The main aim for the USA is to be present as a world hegemon in the Middle East and to influence the developments there. They can only do this personally in the field. In that regard, this relationship is very important to the United States. It is a fact that the United States does not easily digest the dominance of a socialist line in northern Syria. It is also known that therefore there is a very serious struggle between the parties and the relationship.

The USA is following a policy of making a more nationalist line become dominant within the Kurds. Therefore, they want

thought they could get results by having a sort of control over the Salafist forces. But that didn´t work out. The investment into those Salafist powers turned into a home-grown disaster. The investments made by Saudi and Turkey have gained a dimension serving to create a more religious und Salafist Middle East. Ultimately, the United States have come to such a point that the policy they developed failed in all manners. In other words, even Turkey, which has been a strategic ally for forty-fifty years, has left the NATO and the western line, and shifted to a neo-Ottoman, Salafist line by using ISIS and Al-Nusra. Now all this has put the United States under pressure.

On the other hand, America invested in a nationalist line within the Kurds. In southern Kurdistan, they gave an unlimited boost to the KDP line representing the KRG. But the support they gave to the KDP line revealed the same problems and consequences. While the KDP line brought the party into a secret alliance with ISIS, the strategic relations that the KDP had entered with Turkey had virtually wasted the investments that America made there. Neither were they present in Southern Kurdistan nor in Rojava. So, all the bases of the United States policy were destroyed one by one. It came to a point where a situation of chaos emerged. And it was no longer possible for the US to take the road based on any force beyond the power that they would have never preferred in the situation of chaos – the Kurdish freedom movement. Iraq got into the hands of Iran. The KDP is in Turkey's hands. Al-Nusra, ISIS, Ehrar al-Şam, etc. All these powers have been seized by Saudis and Turks. Moreover, there was no way to sustain relationships with those because they are committing great crimes against humanity. The regime was not in a promising position. America has tried all these investments, and ultimately what happened was that they failed. No force was left, which the US could base their policy on.

The Kurdish resistance, especially in Cizîre and Kobanê, created a new situation at this point. Therefore, the US were forced

derstanding of Latin America, we see more of a stance, which is accepting all forces in contradiction to and in war with America as anti-imperialist and therefore is trying to relate to them.

Let´s look at a concrete example: Let's look at the reality of Kurdistan. Kurdistan is divided into four parts. This division happened during World War I. At the end of WWI, there was a world system, which split Kurdistan between four colonialist forces. These four colonialist powers that dominate Kurdistan were continuously financed by imperialists and brought to a stage of national-statism. But during this period, contradictions became clear. Now if we are looking with this knowledge at Latin America, the reality is not obvious. The colonialist system created by the capitalist and imperialist forces does not use the local collaborators. Each of the regimes may it be Iran, Syria, Turkey or Iraq is trying to use an anti-imperialist image when there are contradictions with the USA over their profits. Therefore, the massacres perpetrated by these regimes against the Kurds are ignored. This point of view must change. The world-state system is a capitalist, imperialist and colonialist system. The contradiction between the units of this system can never be defined as anti-imperialism. For example, the current government in Turkey, although it's a colonialist, fascist and fundamentalist government, has been supported by some because of its contradictions with the US. Turkey's disputes with the US were seen as anti-imperialist. But its colonialist character especially against the Kurds and its dependency on imperialism are ignored. How could this pass as anti-imperialism, really?

Turkey is a center of capitalism and nationalism, as well as fundamentalism and nation-statism. Turkey is the strategic ally of the US and one of the biggest military forces. So how can we evaluate it as an anti-imperialist power only because of its temporary contradictions with the US? This is a capitalist-liberal approach that defines itself within the system.

The same thing is also valid for Ba'ath parties that once were the favorites of the revolutionary governments in Latin America. Everybody knows that the Ba'ath parties are the most rotten and most imperialist forms of Arab nationalism and Arab nation-statism. It's a disgrace that they are evaluated as anti-imperialist just because they had close ties with the Soviet Bloc and sometimes contradicted with the US. Ba'ath regimes are known for their cruel regimes over the peoples of Middle East.

A similar analysis goes for Iran. Iran is a fundamentalist regime which is grounded on a sect of Islam. Its current structure is not separate from the capitalist world order. It has close ties with imperialism. If we look at the last years, we can see this in concrete examples. If we look at the stance taken by the left-wing governments of Latin America, we can understand this easily. The relations based on the view that Iran is an anti-imperialist power because of its contradictions with the US, show the problematic condition of Latin America's anti-imperialist powers. Look at Cuba, Venezuela and other Latin American countries where there are leftist governments that are continuously agitating against America – they are praising the sub-hegemonic powers of imperialism in the Middle East and Asia only because of their anti-American stance. This is a serious delusion.

I want to say it again: being anti-American does not automatically mean being anti-imperialist. Anti-Americanism is to be against one center of imperialism. Staying only as anti-American is to legitimize other colonialist and imperialist powers. Therefore, we need to have a strong, rooted paradigm for our vision of the world's capitalist system and its imperialistic hegemony. If we are looking at this from the perspective of paradigms one must stand beyond only commenting the daily political developments. A global perspective is necessary to analyze from a global perspective thoroughly who is really a tool of imperialist hegemony and who is fighting against it. In this manner, there is a big issue in the anti-system movements

as well as in the deep-rooted tradition of liberation in Latin America. One must overcome this delusion.

Before the start of the Raqqa-operation there was a meeting between the US Secretary of Defense and the Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım in London. After this meeting there was a declaration by the US that the YPG is not a preference, but a necessity for the USA. Do you think this was stated to address the concerns of the Turkish state, or was it a striking summary of the American policies in general and of imperialist and colonial forces in particular?

The sentence by the American defense minister before the Raqqa operation is indeed very important. This is what I've been trying to explain from the beginning. Actually, he made a very good statement in only one sentence. America cannot afford a preference, it only has a necessity. There is no power left in Syria that America has not tried to ally with. Sorting them exceeds the boundaries of this interview, I won't elaborate on it.

With whom didn't America try to ally? America has tried the Saudis, America has tried Turkey, America has tried to ally with all these Salafist groups. It tried to ally with the FSA and many other similar forces. So, there's no power left to try. But America couldn't get the results wanted with any of those "allies". It certainly couldn't. So, it invested a lot into the Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar alliance, but ultimately got in conflict with them all. There is no Salafist force with which the United States didn't try to ally, including Al Nusra and ISIS. They all failed. As such, PYD, YPG, or more precisely, the Kurdish movement was not supported under any circumstances, and its existence was not even pronounced.

The struggle for freedom of the Kurds was sacrificed to Turkish colonialism and Saudi-Arabian interests. The regime's situation was observed, and the regime was also sacrificed looking at it from the perspective of long-term state relations. They