

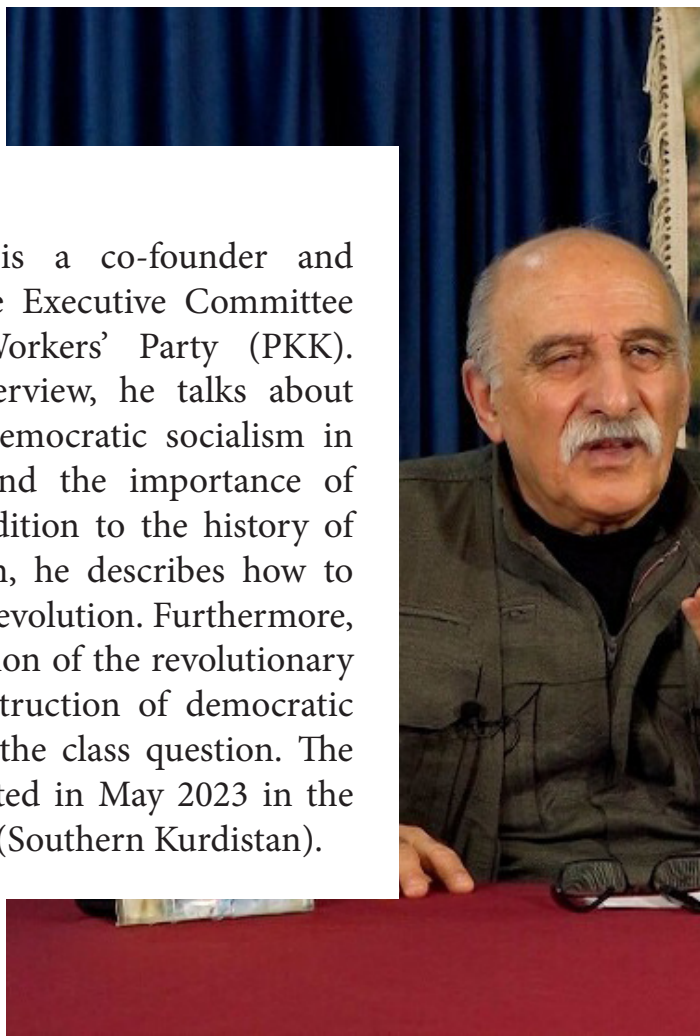
Democratic Modernity paves the way for Democratic Socialism

Interview with Duran Kalkan



**Academy of
Democratic
Modernity**

Duran Kalkan is a co-founder and member of the Executive Committee of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). In this extensive interview, he talks about how to understand democratic socialism in the new paradigm and the importance of social sciences. In addition to the history of democratic civilisation, he describes how to understand state and revolution. Furthermore, he discusses the question of the revolutionary vanguard in the construction of democratic modernity as well as the class question. The interview was conducted in May 2023 in the Medya Defence Areas (Southern Kurdistan).







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The foremost theorist and leader of the Kurdish freedom movement Abdullah Öcalan, declared after the collapse of the Soviet Union that “to insist on socialism is to insist on being human”. Today, the Kurdistan freedom movement uses the term “democratic modernity” as an alternative system to capitalist modernity. What does this mean for understanding socialism today?

It is true that during the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Abdullah Öcalan said: “To insist on socialism is to insist on being human”. He reaffirms this definition by adding: “To doubt socialism means to doubt human beings and their social existence”.

What does this definition really mean? It means that humans are social beings. In the past, this has been a fundamental subject of debate between socialists and liberals of all kinds. The question of what kind of being humans are has been asked again and again, and different answers have been given. As is well known, liberalism treats humans as individuals. It asserts that we only exist as individuals. Socialist thinking, on the other hand, defines humans as social. For example: “A person is human because of their socialisation” or “we are where we are now because of society”. Therefore, the individual cannot be analysed and judged separately from society. Socialism thus assumes the position that a correct evaluation requires a joint analysis of society and the individual. A close examination of history and a close sociological study of the relationship between humans and society clearly show us that this corresponds to reality.

In fact, liberals know this too. All ruling state forces know that the individual does not exist independent of society. However, in order to successfully realise the exploitation they seek, it is more advantageous for their own interests to disintegrate society and thus also disempower the individual. It is easier to oppress and exploit an individual who is alienated from society. In this way they have established an easier and stronger rule. By twisting facts, destroying sociality, dividing the individual from society and filling it with distorted ideas of freedom and equality, the individual is easily exploited. As a result, the individual has become extremely weak and powerless in the face of their system of domination. Therefore, the views liberalism upholds about the relationship between the individual and society are a serious distortion.

There is no human life detached from the life of society

In the past, these questions have been discussed many times, today this question is still not completely off the table. If it seems of little relevance today, it is because liberalism does not engage in such discussions. This is because it

considers itself successful in this respect to socialism. Liberalism believes that it has broken up society, divided it into individuals and separated them from society. It sees its success in the fact that it has established all kinds of systems of domination and exploitation over individuals on the basis of false perceptions. This has been the case especially since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Thus, the controversy has almost disappeared. Nevertheless, this difference becomes clear when we look at sociological studies and discussions about the individual and society.

Liberal thinking of all kinds starts from the individual. It defines life as exclusively limited to the individual, does not see or does not want to see social life. It tries to keep the social out of sight and out of mind. Liberal thinking tries to detach the individual from society and develop maximum individualism on this basis. But the reality of our lives and society does not align. We are social beings. There is no human being completely detached from society. Indeed, the process of becoming human has historically taken place on this basis. Individual and society are expressions of such intertwined and dialectical integrity in human history. Öcalan found it necessary to use these definitions to fundamentally refute and weaken the anti-socialist propaganda of the far-reaching liberal attack that was unleashed on the world during the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This was very useful and revealing, by helping people who joined socialism by rote, rather than understanding, to see and understand concretely what socialism really is, how it is embodied in the life of individuals and society, and what its value is to life. Since he was not satisfied with existing definitions, these new definitions, and undoubtedly the evaluations and theoretical analyses he developed on this basis, were extremely effective and fruitful in refuting all kinds of liberal attacks while keeping socialist consciousness alive and developing it further. In an environment where anti-socialist attitudes were developing in the face of all kinds of liberal attacks in Kurdistan and its surrounding areas, and where the flight from socialism was in full swing throughout the world, Öcalan's efforts resulted in keeping the belief in and commitment to socialism alive in Kurdistan and its region. In Kurdistan and its immediate surroundings, unlike other parts of the world, people have not turned away from socialism.

However, Öcalan did not do this in a very dogmatic, dry way, for example by merely presenting and defending concepts. He asserted the truth that the individual coexists with society but he also developed a critical and self-critical approach to the dissolution of real socialism by exposing the basic facts that led to the dissolution, overcoming them and making intellectual progress with a view to the basic ideas in socialism. His critical-self-critical approach to socialism, the correction of the mistakes and shortcomings experienced in real socialism, combined with the historical content of the concepts concerned, have made Öcalan's thoughts and definition of socialism understandable and credible.

Redefinition of democratic socialism on the basis of criticism and self-criticism of real socialism

Öcalan coined the term “democratic modernity” as an alternative to “capitalist modernity”. As a movement organised and acting on the basis of Öcalan’s ideas, we often refer to the concept of democratic modernity. This does not mean that we do not use the concept of socialism at all, that we do not define socialism or that we replaced it. In addition to democratic modernity, Öcalan also redefined and developed democratic socialism.

He also stated that it was not wrong to call it “scientific socialism” - as it has been called in the past. However, he said, it is more correct and understandable to call it democratic socialism in order to make some distinction. As a movement, we start from these terms and conduct our theoretical evaluations and discussions within the framework of these concepts.

So why did Öcalan emphasise the term “modernity”? One of his main criticisms of real socialism is its inability to adequately define capitalist modernity and to develop its own modernity as an alternative to it. He found real socialism’s analysis of capitalism too narrow and one-sided. He noted that “real socialism analysed the exploitation dimension of capitalism”. Also, in evaluating Marxism, he found that it adequately analysed exploitation and the law of maximum profit. Thus, he exposed a dimension of capitalist exploitation and developed communalism, as well as the principle of sharing as an alternative to it. Instead, he defined socialism as a communal system, i.e. an order without exploitation.

However, capitalism does not only consist of the economic order. It has its own modernity. Capitalist modernity has several other dimensions. For example, the dimension of industrialism is a form of exploitation that carries out the almost total destruction of nature on the basis of the law of maximum profit. Real socialism was not able to analyse the nation-state system as a dimension that creates all possibilities and means for the implementation of this capitalist exploitation and applies oppression and cruelty at the highest level in mentality and practice. Although real socialism wanted to free itself from exploitation and the law of maximum profit, it adopted the industrialism of capitalist modernity unchanged. In contrast, it could not develop an ecological understanding and system. It could not establish an ecological order.

Furthermore, real socialism saw the nation-state as the fundamental system that would enable it to overcome exploitation and the law of maximum profit. However, the nation-state was created in the first place as a means to enforce these very things. It was simply not possible to eliminate exploitation through a means or a system that enforced it. Consequently, the nation-state could not be

properly defined and thus no alternative to the nation-state could be developed. Real socialism focused more on the exploitation dimension of capitalism and tried to define socialism as an alternative. But it could not analyse capitalism together with its modernity. It could not recognise the other dimensions of capitalist modernity. Therefore, it could not develop its own modernity. As a result, real socialism assumed that it could realise its own understanding of order, with the tools and in the dimensions of capitalist modernity. In the end, what emerged was not socialism but a “monopolistic state capitalism”. Öcalan went into detail about the definition of monopolist state capitalism. He stated that the practise of real socialism, together with industrialism and the nation-state dimensions, quickly turned into monopolistic state capitalism, detached itself from socialism and therefore could not properly realise the principles of freedom, equality and sharing on a social basis that it aimed for.

Democratic Modernity as the modernity of democratic socialism

On this basis, the main conclusion Öcalan drew from the analysis and critique of real socialism was to define capitalist modernity as a whole, to point out democratic modernity as an alternative to it and to define this as the modernity of “democratic socialism”. He contrasted “democratic confederalism” with the nation-state and defined the ecological industrial society as an alternative to industrialism. As an alternative to capitalism, he defined democratic society, i.e. political and moral society. Thus, a contemporary socialism, which real socialism could not develop or define, was broadly captured by the concept of democratic modernity. Öcalan drew these conclusions from the experience of real socialism. He overcame the inadequacy, limitation and narrow-mindedness of the assumptions of real socialism on the basis of this new theoretical definition. This fact is undoubtedly very important. It is necessary to go beyond the contradiction and definition of capitalism and socialism. The contradiction and conceptualisation of capitalism and socialism express a reality, but they are also insufficient on their own.

If one only looks at and evaluates capitalism and socialism as an ideological framework, but is unable to see and define the modernity in which they are expressed, one cannot understand society and political systems. In this regard, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between capitalism and modernity and understand them well and correctly. It is equally necessary to correctly evaluate the relationship between socialism and modernity. Therefore, it is necessary to understand and classify Öcalan's remarks on democratic modernity as an alternative to capitalist modernity very well. If this is not the case capitalism and socialism, as its alternative, are seen very narrowly and one-sidedly. They are seen in one dimension. The concept of modernity cannot be seen and understood at all. Öcalan was the one who overcame this problem.

Democratic modernity paves the way for democratic socialism

Öcalan's further analyses and thoughts are undoubtedly very important. In this sense, we use the term democratic modernity. Democratic modernity paves the way for democratic socialism. It is modernity that realises democratic socialism.

Capitalism and socialism remain abstract definitions if they are not considered in relation to modernity. They cannot materialise. For the realm in which capitalism materialises is its modernity. The same is true of socialism. That is, the realm in which democratic socialist ideology takes shape, that is democratic modernity. We know that this is defined by three basic levels. One is the democratic level, that is, the level of political-moral society. This is developing against capitalist exploitation and the law of maximum profit. Socialism is ideologically represented on this level. The next level is that of ecological industrial society, which opposes the industrialism of capitalism. Finally, against the nation-state dimension of capitalist modernity, the democratic-confederalist dimension of democratic modernity is taken as a basis. These levels must be understood correctly. We must not confuse them with each other.

So when we speak of democratic modernity, we do not use this term instead of democratic socialism. Democratic modernity and democratic socialism are intertwined. In other words, democratic socialism is given life by democratic modernity and becomes a practice through it. Democratic modernity paves the way for democratic socialism. It enables the realisation of democratic socialism.

We call it democratic socialism to show its difference from real socialism, which could not define its own modernity, could not recognise capitalist modernity and could not overcome it. Thus we can comment on the concepts of modernity and socialism. Of course, there are some more points we need to add. We can place democratic socialism within the framework of democratic modernity, but as an ideological line it also has a paradigm on which it is based. Democratic socialism is based on the liberation of women, ecological society and democratic or moral and political society. It is based on these fundamental principles. It overcomes the capitalist form of exploitation with the values and principles of moral and political society. It overcomes the industrialised form of exploitation with the mentality of social ecology. Women's freedom is the basis of all freedom and equality. At this point, democratic socialism clearly goes beyond the socialist conceptions - which we call petty-bourgeois socialism.

The understanding of freedom and equality

We all know that socialism is generally defined by the principles of freedom, equality and sharing. But the concept of freedom is not absolute. Freedom, but what kind of freedom? Equality, but what kind of equality? Sharing, but in what way? Lenin said, "The capitalists have robbed the world in the name of freedom of trade." That too was freedom. Capitalism has destroyed society and all social values, especially in the last hundred, two hundred years. And it did this in the name of individual freedom. It has even tried to incorporate women's freedom into it. Now, in this respect, there is a petty-bourgeois understanding and a petty-bourgeois approach to the principles of freedom, equality and sharing. All this we can call petty-bourgeois socialism. And then there is the democratic socialist approach. We call this "genuine socialism". But how do petty-bourgeois standards and democratic socialist standards differ in this respect? We have already explained a concept of freedom here: there is an understanding that starts from individual freedom, that develops individualism, separates the individual from society and assumes that an individual freedom can be realised and lived without society. We call this a petit-bourgeois understanding of freedom. In reality, it is the liberal understanding of freedom. It is the essence of liberalism and thus the essence of capitalism.

Democratic socialism opposes such an understanding of freedom. It considers individual freedom in terms of social freedom or the democratic community. It says that the free individual can only be realised and come alive in the democratic commune or - if we use the term community instead of commune - in the democratic community. It sees individual freedom outside society as false, does not accept it, does not see it as realisable. It assumes that the free individual can only be realised in the democratic community, in the democratic society. It states that democratic society can only exist with free individuals on this basis. Accordingly, petty-bourgeois socialism and democratic socialism formulate and claim a completely opposite understanding of freedom. They start from different standards.

In fact, the difference is even more visible in the understanding of equality. In petty-bourgeois socialism, the concept of equality is also defined in terms of so-called "absolute equality". This means that all people are treated equally regardless of their differences, so that, for example, everyone receives the same wage. Everyone is supposed to do the same work, eat the same food, wear the same clothes; in other words, an approach that unifies them, makes them equal on this level and "robotises" them. Of course, this can only make sense in an environment where there are monopolies and also the dispossessed. Equalising those who are so separate and differentiated seems progressive. But this progress is only temporary. So what is this equality based on? That is the question to which the right answer is sought. Of course, the one who makes this equality acts according to their own standards. For example, will

equality between genders be achieved by bringing women into line with men? Can there be equality between capitalists and workers by making all workers capitalists? This understanding of equality does not see the differences. It also does not see the diversity, colourfulness and richness in nature and society. Where differences are destroyed and everything is unified, a fascist mentality and politics are born. Understanding this point is crucial.

Democratic socialism, on the other hand, is based on equality of differences. In other words, democratic socialism, democratic commune or democratic confederalism is a system of free organisation and equal participation. One unit does not equalise itself to another by transforming itself into it. They equalise with each other by preserving and developing their own existence. Each unit freely protects its own originality. Democratic socialism protects the autonomy of differences, it does not destroy them. In this respect, it is based on diversity. This is how real equalisation comes about. Democratic socialism seeks equality not by “masculinising” women, but by sensitising and organising women as women, by providing for their participation in social life as equal subjects. This is very important and also meaningful. We call this an understanding of equality based on differences. An understanding of equality that respects the existence, originality and freedom of differences. In this way, democratic socialism overcomes petty-bourgeois socialism’s understanding of absolute equality, which does not recognise differences.

Another important point is the democratic commune system. Real socialism saw the commune as a state institution. In democratic socialism, however, the commune belongs to society. It is a social phenomenon. The commune is an institution of those who participate in it. The commune belongs to those who participate in it. The state does not own all municipalities, or even any municipality. On this basis, in communal life, in community life, there is an understanding of sharing that takes into account differences in relation to an understanding of equality. In other words, it is not a system that offers everyone a bowl of soup and a hundred-dollar salary. Öcalan calls such a system pharaoh socialism. The pharaoh’s slaves were also equal in life. They all did the same work. Everyone got a bowl of soup in the morning and in the evening. If they got that at all! There was no difference between them. This system of distributing the same to everyone is the petit-bourgeois understanding of commune. What is the communal understanding of democratic socialism, how is the democratic commune formed? It is sharing and using according to need. In other words, in the democratic commune, need-oriented use is essential. In it, the principle of serving, sharing, producing, and using according to need is realised.

Yes, real socialism was also based on this principle, as the basic principle of the commune. Marx in particular emphasised this principle very strongly and

defined it in detail, saying: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". These were undoubtedly important definitions. We do not deny these facts, but the practical implementation was not as Marx had conceived it. Why were the ideas implemented differently? Of course, we have to ask and investigate this question. We can say that it was because no holistic practice was developed. In other words, it was not seen that this was a matter to be realised immediately. Because it was not applied to the whole of life.

Yes, Marx developed these ideas, but to what extent did he himself live in accordance with the requirements of these ideas? To what extent did he develop such a life of his own accord? To what extent did he shape and organise his environment on this basis, to what extent did he develop his organised life and party formation on the basis of these principles of life? Of course, these are points that need to be discussed and questioned.

If we look at how Öcalan develops a holistic practice, we see that he created everything from his own path, his experiences, challenges and successes with following these principles. He puts into practise in his own life everything that he envisaged as the right standards of life and he organises his environment on this basis. He has developed the party and the guerrilla entirely on the basis of these principles. He does not relate the democratic commune to political power and postpone the realisation of its goals to a later date, but he attempts to realise them from the very beginning , from within his own struggle, with the cadres and within the party as a whole. This is very important. This is also a fundamental element that prevents and invalidates possible attempts to distort the practice. In other words, socialism is no longer an abstract way of life or ideology of the future. It becomes realisable from the moment one becomes aware of it.

This does not necessarily mean that the whole society has to be socialist first or that everyone has to live that way first. When a person breaks away from the existing society and comes to a socialist understanding, they realise this by starting an alternative socialist life themselves. They can develop a group, a party, a guerrilla out of it. This is what Öcalan's practice expresses. According to this, socialism ceases to be an understanding, an ideological line, a way of life that is applied only after taking political power. He saves it from dependence on politics and power. On the contrary, he sees it as a mindset, a mentality. Arriving at such a mindset shows that socialism can be practised on the basis of creating one's own politics - regardless of who holds political power. It can be lived by a single individual as well as in a small group, in a party, in a region, in a society. It can be lived on different levels. Öcalan reveals this reality. This is also a dimension of democratic socialism. A correct understanding of all these dimensions is necessary to understand the thoughts of Öcalan adequately and

comprehensively.

Just as the Frankfurt School or the Annales School, have engaged in an in-depth discussion of the capitalist system, its history and possible alternatives, Öcalan's "Democratic Civilisation" is also described as a new school of social science. What does this mean?

In the 19th century, socialists mostly focused on the period in which capitalist exploitation developed and spread in Europe. They did not pay enough attention to the history before that. They even referred to it as a prehistoric, primitive stage of history. Some claimed that civilisation emerged with capitalism. They considered the developments brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the European Enlightenment as a development triggered by capitalism. On this basis, they praised capitalism in the highest terms, regarding it as the golden age of history. They said that humanity had completed its greatest revolution and would therefore now easily move on to socialism. They considered capitalism as a precursor to socialism.

In the 20th century, new archaeological finds would change this understanding of history. However, whilst we may assume such a find may have given way to a widening of perspective, something rather different unfolded. Socialists did not create an awareness that went beyond a further narrowing of perspective of human development within the framework of linear progression. At best, they began history with the Sumerian system. Writing was invented in Sumer. The first city, Uruk, was founded in Sumer. The state took its beginning in Sumer. Classes were invented in Sumer. The class struggle began in Sumer. Power had developed and deepened here. All this was considered an outstanding development in the history of mankind. It should be noted in particular that here the city, the class, the state, power and male domination are seen as a great advance. They are defined as a stage of development for humanity. History before Sumer was considered primitive history. The Neolithic society, the clan, was not even called a form of society. They were called primitive communities. Clan life was defined as primitive community life. The agricultural-village revolution, the Neolithic revolution, the women's revolution were not considered civilisation. They were considered a period of barbarism before civilisation. Through this, therein an even greater dependence on the system of power and the state ensued.

Power and the state in socialist thought

Why did socialist thinking assume so much power and state, why was it so tied to power and state? This is, of course, one of the questions that most need to be asked, discussed and sought to be answered correctly. In fact, it was the socialists who defined the state as a form of oppression and exploitation. Lenin and Marx personally held this definition. They defined socialism as a state that is no longer a state. The state, together with its class society and its oppressive violence, was to be overcome or made superfluous. But the socialism of the Soviet Union, real socialism, became the largest state apparatus.

They both describe the state as an organised form of oppression and exploitation, a power that emerges from society but is above society, is detached from it and the source of all kinds of oppression, exploitation, domination, discrimination and inequality. They advocate that socialism and communism only attain their true meaning with the withering away of the state. They base themselves on such a system of thought, but then they affirm and praise any kind of state development and consider it progress. They call the destruction of a state and the establishment of a new state a revolution. They declare and believe that they are realising socialism through the most advanced nation-state. They claim that they will realise freedom, equality, participation and communality through the state. They claim that they will achieve liberation from exploitation and oppression through the organisation of oppression and exploitation. This is not an understandable attitude.

This is the area where the Marxist-Leninist school of socialism in particular makes the biggest and most glaring mistake. To a certain extent, especially in Russia, this is understandable. In the face of the devastating attacks of global capitalism and its imperialist stage, they considered the building of a defensive force, an army and the organisation of a state as necessary. They said that these attacks could only be repelled by a state and its army. The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat increasingly prevailed on this basis, and the system developed on the October Revolution became the largest, most concentrated and bureaucratic state-organised system in history. This is an undeniable reality. Now this must be properly understood and evaluated.

If we pay attention, regardless of whether civilisation or history begins with the capitalist phase or with Sumer, they are all based on statehood. For them, only power and state systems shape history. They define humanity and societies as power and state. The way today's nation-states try to do it, they dissolve the individual and society in the nation-state, tie them to the nation-state. This is wrong. In fact, today's nation-states are practising this at the most advanced level. So, do they develop socialism or do they, on the contrary, destroy

socialism, consume society and the individual as a social being? Undoubtedly, the latter is the case. It is the latter that is being put into practise.

The understanding of history in democratic civilisation

The line of thought developed by Öcalan criticises the socialist view of the 19th and 20th centuries. So, he formulated a new perspective, the system of thought he calls democratic civilisation. Democratic modernity is undoubtedly being developed as an alternative to capitalist modernity. However, we cannot say that democratic civilisation is an alternative to state, monopolistic or centralised civilisation. After the monopolistic civilisation emerges, democratic civilisation becomes its alternative. More precisely, the state or monopolistic civilisation develops as an alternative to the democratic civilisation. Öcalan analysed and explained that a rupture of civilisation happened in Sumer. This means that there was a civilisation before. It was divided in Sumer and a monopolistic-state civilisation emerged as an alternative to the real civilisation system. We call the actual civilisation system democratic civilisation. Öcalan defines the dominant human history as the system of democratic civilisation. He expresses it as the understanding of history of democratic civilisation. We can also call it civilisation.

In Turkish studies, we have some problems in this regard. This is because in the Turkish dictionaries developed by the Turkish Language Society, there are distortions of the terms. For example, one of the most distorted terms is the term *uygarlık* (civilisation). In these dictionaries, the term *uygarlık* is expressed as the Turkish version of the Arabic term *medeniyet*. The Arabic term comes from *medina*, meaning urbanisation. It means *Şehir uygarlığı* (urban civilisation). The Turkish equivalent of civilisation is *uygarlık*. In Arabic, however, this is not the case. The Arabic equivalent of civilisation, which is Turkish [also] in Arabic, is *Hadara*. So, it is not *medeniyet*. *Medeniyet*, on the other hand, means urbanisation in Arabic. It comes from the word *medina* and means urban civilisation. So, if we consider *uygarlık* (civilisation) and *medeniyet* (urbanisation) in the same language, *medeniyet* began in Sumer. The centre of power, the state and urbanisation was located there. Class formation took place there. Therefore, using Aristotle's logic, they conclude that *Uygarlık* also began there. However, these approaches are not correct¹.

Civilisation essentially means settledness, i.e., the permanence of culture. This can only be realised in a sedentary society. However, sedentary society does not necessarily equal urbanisation. Before that, there was the agrarian-village revolution. For thousands of years, the agrarian-village sedentary society existed. As a result of recent archaeological excavations, we can add a second

point here. Uruk is not the first city. In other words, the first cities in history were not founded in Sumer. There were cities long before that. New findings show us that city systems were founded and inhabited as early as 15,000 BC. This means that city and class, city and state, city and power are not inherently connected. The state developed in the city, that is true, and class formation takes place predominantly in cities. Cities are the reason for state and class formation. But it is not correct to say that the city is synonymous with the class-state. There are also classless and non-state cities. There are also cities that were founded and inhabited before the class and state formation. New archaeological excavations clearly show us this very important and new insight.

In this respect, to place the beginning of civilisation and history in Sumer is to identify civilisation with the state. It means identifying society with the state. This way of thinking confuses the state and society and entangles them. However, society is separate from the state. We are now in a position to know what society is and what the state is. The system of democratic society clarifies all these questions. It defines a new understanding of history based on new insights and the latest studies. It considers ninety-eight per cent of human history as the time of clan society. It refers to clan society as the stem society and states that it lives on as the stem cell in all societies to this day. It gives greater importance and position to clan society. It proves that society itself is completely political and moral and that natural society, political society and moral society existed mainly in clan society.

It also defines the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods as the second period of civilisation or democratic civilisation. It defines this as a period that developed from 20,000 BC onwards. It notes that a significant part of this period was lived as matriarchal. It justifies the women's revolution with the developments in this period and also defines this period as the agricultural-village revolution. And so it defines the long period of thousands of years in which societies moved from nomadic clan life to settled life as agrarian village societies. Öcalan explains that the real great revolution is the Neolithic revolution. It is the agrarian-village revolution. In other words, he defines the first great social revolution in history as the women-driven agricultural-village revolution that developed with the Neolithic period. After the agricultural-village revolution, the second great social revolution that humankind experienced was the industrial revolution.

He criticised and condemned approaches that treat the industrial revolution and capitalism as intertwined or even identical. Capitalism is a form of exploitation

1 The English term "civilization" derives from the Latin civis, citizen; in this sense, the conception handed down from the etymon not only opposes civitas as a superior urban civilization to the inferior rural rusticitas but links the concept to the very State form of the res publica.

and domination, while industry is a form of production and social life. Capitalism may be based on the industrial revolution, on industrial society, it may have developed on this basis; however that does not mean industrial society and capitalism are one and the same. Equating them in this way shows a poor understanding of capitalism. It means ascribing characteristics to capitalism that it does not deserve, that it does not have in itself. We must not fall into such misunderstandings.

With the system of democratic civilisation, Öcalan re-evaluated the historical perspective, the historical thesis and the whole historical process. He defines the agrarian-village revolution and the society developed in the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods as the second major period of the democratic civilisation system. The third period is the break or dichotomy in this civilisation system that began with Sumer. He notes that there is a rupture here and that because of urbanisation in Sumer, class, power, statehood, male supremacy, patriarchy and hierarchy emerged interlocking and on a mutually nourishing basis. Class, state and male domination are all present at the same time. It is a clear fact that the family system based on male domination developed during this period and has survived on this basis until today. Here it is the state-based civilisation that divides, differentiates and diverges. It is the power and state system. In other words, Öcalan understands power and state as a monopoly. He also calls it monopolistic civilisation and centralist civilisation respectively. If there is such a separation, of course, the system of democratic civilisation lives as an alternative to the monopolistic civilisation. The third historical period is this period, that is, the period from Sumer to the present. Here there is no singular civilisation. There are alternative civilisations. The civilisations that have developed within the framework of a multiplicity of powers and states are defined as a central monopolistic civilisation system. As an alternative to this, there is the system of democratic civilisation in all areas. Civilisation structures based on society, based on democratic social forces, based on political and moral social forces, indeed the whole struggle for democracy is called the democratic civilisation system. Öcalan analyses this in three basic epochs. The first epoch he names as the period from Sumer to Rome. He designates the middle era as the developments in Europe and the Middle East and the development of systems of rule based on religion. Thirdly, he defines the most recent age. In other words, he defines the last 500 years, which we call the period of capitalist modernity, as the youngest age. It is not clear how long it will be a civilising system. Capitalism is still a state of modernity, that is, an epoch.

Öcalan defines democratic civilisation as an alternative to these. He refers to the struggle of the slaves in the first era, all the clans, tribes, tribal communities and ethnicities that fought against enslavement and a free life, the struggle of women against enslavement and for the abolition of slavery, all the structures

that stand outside and fight against all kinds of monopolistic power-based state systems as democratic civilisation. In the medieval age, again, these are the resistance of slaves, the resistance of women, the resistance of peasants and ethnic groups. In more recent times, the struggle of the working class comes to the fore as a new struggle against capitalism that plays a role along with these. He defines all this as the struggle and development of democratic civilisation.

In relation to the present, it designates and defines all groupings that oppose and struggle against the monopolistic-capitalist nation-state system as elements of democratic modernity and thus as part of the struggle for democratic civilisation. In other words, the system of democratic civilisation is a comprehensive new system of thought that analyses historical society from clan society to the present and defines the different phases of development of historical society in its own way. This is how we must look at the system of democratic civilisation. If there is such a holistic system of thought that analyses the development of historical society, we can naturally call it a school of thought. This is a contribution to social science or even a new perspective of social science. It should be emphasised that it is different from the social sciences, which begin history with capitalism. It is also different from the social sciences that begin history with Sumer. It is based on a new definition of historical society. It is therefore a new social science, distinct from the known social sciences.

The system of democratic civilisation as a new school of social science

We should understand and recognise this teaching as a part of social science. In this respect, there is an “Abdullah Öcalan Academy of Social Sciences”, Öcalan said, “Historically, I can be called a social scientist and understood and regarded as such.” He described the system of democratic civilisation that he developed as a new school of social science. Accordingly, he declared that a new social science academy should be established. He said that an academy of social sciences should be established in all places and that all studies, sociological discussions and analyses should be conducted within the framework of such an academy.

Undoubtedly, the central component of this social science is Jineoloji, the “science of women”. Jineoloji deals, among other things, with the reality of women, the problem of (un)freedom and the struggle of women from a women’s perspective. Öcalan expresses the crucial role of women in the development of social life and human development. While most religiously influenced ideas claimed that woman came from man, he criticised this way of thinking. He based this critique on his diverse studies, on historical developments, on the influence of women in life, on the creative, fertile, biological and physiological existence of women. He argued that the essential element of creation was woman, and that

if there is such a thing as the creation of one from the other, only the creation of man from woman could be true.

Accordingly, he also attributed to women a central role in political and moral society. In the struggle for democratic socialism, he identified women as the leading force. He argued that women's vanguard role in the struggle and organisation is necessary and indispensable. He sees the women's liberation revolution as the basis of all libertarian revolutions, developments and social changes. We must take this into account when considering social science.

He also considers the role of Mesopotamia in the development of civilisation to be important. Although clan society developed in different parts of the world, Mesopotamia was the centre of the agrarian-village revolution, the transition from nomadic clan life to sedentary life, and thus the centre of the first great social movement, the development of civilisation. All the finds and archaeological excavations show this. It must be admitted that such periods also existed in other areas, but the main development took place in Mesopotamia. The major development is the Neolithic revolution in Mesopotamia, the agricultural-village system, the development of civilisation. Following this development, there was a break with civilisation in Lower Mesopotamia, in Sumer, on the territory of present-day Iraq. The central role of Mesopotamia both in the development of sedentary society and in the emergence of the power-based monopolistic-state civilisation in the break with civilisation shows the importance of Mesopotamia. It shows that Mesopotamia is the central channel of historical social development.

Öcalan also discusses this in the democratic civilisation system. Some criticise this. They see it as too Mesopotamia- or Middle East-centred. Others judge it as a self-centred approach. Such assessments are wrong. In fact, Öcalan has taken Kurdish society as the basis for his reflections, researching and analysing it. Thus, he develops his thoughts and works starting from this society. The study of Kurdish society has led him to his system of thought. What characterises Kurdish society? How did the Kurdish individual and the Kurdish community come into being? How did the Kurdish communities live? How were they socialised? What is their role in history? The search for answers, the research into the history of the Kurds and the determination to show the Kurdish reality led him to such an approach. It is with this background and critical questioning that we need to understand him.

Why are the Kurds, both as individuals and as a community, so different from other societies? Why are there so many attacks on Kurdistan and the Kurdish population? They have been attacked since Sumer. All invaders who wanted to conquer civilisation and the state system wanted to occupy Mesopotamia and thus Kurdistan. But where does this motivation come from and where

did the policy of denial and extermination - genocide - originate and how has it been applied to the Kurds for a hundred years? Why does no state in the world, no religion, no morality oppose it? Why does everybody accept it and keep silent? Öcalan's thoughts revolve around these questions in his search for answers. It is understandable that a leader who struggles to understand and change today's Kurdish reality, who starts and leads such a struggle, who experiences all the difficulties of this struggle, comes to these conclusions. This is how it should be perceived. Approaches that deviate from this, other views, are not correct. It is not about putting Kurdish society at the centre. But it is very important to recognise the truth and to be aware of it. In order to understand today correctly and to build tomorrow successfully, the past must be understood correctly and in its entirety. In such a search for the past, he has arrived at this system of thinking, and this needs to be understood. Instead of rejecting it with narrow-minded approaches, it is best to become aware of the system of democratic civilisation, to understand it, to apply on this basis the social science that analyses or expresses this system of thought to the historical and present social reality, and to conduct the future struggle on the basis of such a system of thought.

This system of thought, social science, which is supported by the idea of democratic civilisation, is the latest, most scientific and closest to reality synthesis of historically grown human thought. One must know and recognise that the system of thought of Öcalan is such a great synthesis.

If analysed carefully, his paradigm has no approach that takes something for granted from the start, takes it as true, or rejects something outright. It values all worldviews, approaches them with respect, treats them holistically, evaluates them, appreciates and identifies those aspects that have served and still serve humanity, and discards those that do not serve it, those that are detached from society, those that serve the power and (national) state system and monopoly. The new social science or "apoist social science" is based on the system of democratic civilisation as a system of thought that incorporates and synthesises all positive aspects, i.e. those aspects that are connected with society and serve social existence, freedom, social truth, goodness, righteousness and beauty. The new social science, also called apoistic social science, is the expression of this system of thought. Taking this as a school and analysing and evaluating historical society on the basis of such thought brings us closer to the truth, enables us to find the truth, to plan a more accurate future, to shape it and to struggle successfully.

What is the understanding of revolutionary vanguard in this new understanding of socialism? What are the tasks of the party of democratic modernity in building a democratic, ecological and women's liberation-based society?

Öcalan defined the field of intellectual development of the line of democratic socialism as the social science academy and the vanguard party as the field of education, organisation and practical implementation (action) of this line. Therefore, he considered the vanguard role of the party necessary for the implementation of the new paradigm, the “democratic, ecological and women's liberation-based paradigm of society”. In other words, he did not reject vanguards in any way. But he changed the definition of leadership in real socialism. He developed a new definition of leadership. Marx once said, “Philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways, but what matters is to change it.” It should be emphasised that Öcalan is both trying to grasp and understand the world and to change it. In other words, he is both a philosopher and a revolutionary. Therefore, we need to look at the system of Abdullah Öcalan's Academy of Social Sciences. The reality of the Academy of Social Sciences must not be looked at lightly, it must not be approached in a narrow and limited way.

Yes, it should of course be seen as a continuation of the social science academies that have played a role in history. But it is not an imitation or anything like that, but a new school of social sciences that has emerged with a new idea. This is how we should define Abdullah Öcalan's Academy of Social Science and accordingly emphasise a mentality formation, intellectual development and change. We must see and understand Öcalan as such a force of thinking and try to understand and internalise it. If we do not do this, we are making a mistake. If we take a narrow or fragmented approach, we cannot understand him properly. Undoubtedly, it is a synthesis of all contemporary spiritual currents, but it is also a new system of thought. In other words, we cannot look at it in isolation from earlier currents of thought. But neither can we regard it as an ordinary repetition of these currents. If we were to do so, we would be on the wrong track from the start. Those who do not understand Öcalan correctly in terms of mentality and thought structure, cannot understand the style, expression and tempo, of his party, the guerrilla, women's and youth organisations, the social movement and the mass movement, cannot grasp the democratic-political struggle correctly and cannot organise and lead it successfully.

The vanguard role of the party is absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of democratic socialism

On this basis, it is a fact that with the new paradigm in the PKK, a change has taken place in terms of the vanguard role of the party. It is certain that our vanguard party has become a party based on a new paradigm, the paradigm of democratic, ecological and women's liberation-based society and has overcome the power- and state-based paradigm. In other words, today's PKK and "Party of Free Women in Kurdistan" (PAJK) is not a state-oriented, power-based party. It absolutely rejects this and overcomes it. Instead, it strives for a democratic-socialist paradigm based on women's freedom and ecology. This is a new form of leadership, a new party. But such a vanguard party is absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of democratic socialism. In other words, a new party equipped with the new paradigm is absolutely necessary for the realisation of democratic socialism and the successful implementation of the struggle for democracy, ecology and women's liberation. It is also necessary as an avant-garde for the construction of such a society. We have to make this clear. In other words, it is like the relationship between body and soul, matter and consciousness. Just as the construction of democratic society is the body, democratic socialism is its soul, and if the construction of democratic society is matter, democratic socialism is its consciousness, its ideal force.

How do we define the party at this point? The party is the force that best understands and absorbs this force of thought, internalises this system of thought most deeply and holistically, educates itself on this basis and successfully translates this system of thought into education, organisation and action. Accordingly, we must also define the party leadership in the new period. What are their tasks and responsibilities? They are education, organisation and action. That is how we can define them. Here, too, there are fundamental differences. For example, in real socialism, what was the task and responsibility of the party leadership, the power and state-oriented party leadership in the revolution? That was education, organisation, action, the seizure of power, the building of a state and the administration of it. As a result, party and state became almost identical in the Soviet Union. The party and the state administration were composed of the same people. The party played its central role as the administrative apparatus of the state.

Tasks of the vanguard party: education, organisation and action

This will definitely not be the case under democratic socialism. The relations between the vanguard party and democratic confederalism will not be like the relations between the party and the state under real socialism. Öcalan defined

democratic confederalism in Kurdistan as KCK². At least its organisational composition in Kurdistan is the KCK. Therefore, the relations between PKK and KCK will not take the form of party-state as in real socialism or the Soviet Union. Öcalan said that the party is the soul and the KCK is the body. He defined the party as consciousness and leadership. He defined its new role, task and mission. The most concrete points he mentioned in this context were education, organisation and action.

So, when we ask what are the tasks of the vanguard party in the new phase, we have to describe them in two dimensions: Firstly, we can define them as understanding and adopting democratic socialism, its mentality and thought structure in its entirety, subjecting life, events and phenomena to continuous development on this basis, paving the way for society, and constantly playing a role as an enlightening movement by carrying out tasks and missions. The second mission is to implement the line of democratic socialism in education, organisation and action. Of course, education is very important in this context. Education is the decisive factor in the life and struggle of Öcalan. In practical terms, we can call Öcalan the greatest propagandist of all times. If we consider propaganda as a method of education, then the strongest educator is also the strongest propagandist. He did this by writing, speaking and living. He fulfilled this role and mission in practise by creating an atmosphere and moral force. When journalists once asked Öcalan what his strongest weapon was, he said without hesitation “my language”. He carried out all his work on the basis of education. He based his career on self-education. He broke away from the colonialist-genocidal mentality and politics by educating himself. He created his own role and alternative life based entirely on education. His main way of working was always related to education. From the first day till now, he has always based himself on education. He educates himself, he educates his environment, he educates the party, he educates the guerrilla, he educates the women’s and youth movement, he educates a whole people and gradually a whole humanity and its peoples.

It fulfilled all its tasks on the basis of education. One of his most fundamental criticisms of real socialism was its weakness in educating society, its inability to educate and promote its own people. This was one of the most important criticisms of Öcalan. If this system is not able to educate its own people, if it is not able to create good cadres, if it is not able to develop society with its own ideas, then it has clearly shown that socialism cannot be built only with material power, prohibitions, political-military rule, but that the practice of real socialism

² KCK (Koma Civakên Kurdistan) was founded in 2007 and emerged from the PKK. Its aim is to implement the “democratic confederalism” declared by Abdullah Öcalan on 20 March 2005.

was based on this, and that it also failed because of this. Based on this, Öcalan develops what distinguishes him from it. He explained that he would only succeed in the struggle for democratic socialism if he changed the consciousness, the structures of thinking, the structures of mentality, the systems of feelings and thoughts of the people and if he gave them the democratic socialist ideas, the mentality of the free individual and the democratic commune. He proved this in his practise. In evaluating his own practise, he focused mainly on the education system; he asked where we had made mistakes. For example, he said, he had organised very broad education in the education of the cadres and the society. However, he is also self-critical in his defence writings. There, for example, he says: “Was I insufficient in basing the education of the cadres on a more original, narrower, but better understood and internalised education, and in achieving deeper spiritual structures?” This is very important. Nevertheless, he intended to make changes and innovations in the education system to achieve greater success. He further intended to look for and identify his own shortcomings in education, in educational work.

In other words, Öcalan sees education as the first and most fundamental work in party work and in the struggle for democratic socialism and its realisation. First of all, we have to illuminate and understand this fact. The second thing is, of course, organisation. Organisation is not a singular concept for Öcalan. He talks about organising networks. He describes it as a variety of different types of organisation. For example, he envisioned democratic confederalism as a network organisation, as thousands of organisational systems that are intertwined and complement each other. For example, he attaches great importance to the organisation of the vanguard party. He always took its consciousness, its education, its principles and styles that fully realise and live democratic socialism, its communal life and collective work order, the development of the women’s liberation line in the party as the basic line and the consciousness about the fact that it is seen as a means to eliminate all backwardness, domineering thoughts and similar issues as basic values. Therefore, he saw the party organisation, the vanguard organisation as the initiator of everything, of all practice. Although he treated the party organisation as an instrument, he assigned it a role and importance at this level. He emphasised its principles, its formation and its development to a special extent. He focused on the guerrilla organisation as the area where the party was most embodied. He made great efforts to develop the guerrilla. It can be said that he really paid great attention to the guerrilla, both in terms of intellectual development and education and practical leadership. The style, expression and tempo from Öcalan brought it out. No other force could have managed this. He has also created his own will, assertiveness and resilience. These are very important. Against all kinds of weakness, retreat, mistakes and losses, he has been persistent, stubborn, patient and combative to develop what is right. He always showed the will to

fight against all kinds of difficulties. These were very important points. Such will formation and development was absolutely necessary for the development of the guerrillas in Kurdistan.

The periods of party formation

When Öcalan started the struggle, when he became a revolutionary militant, he had friends and sympathisers around him. When the apoist group became an ideological group, a cadre group, it always had sympathisers among the aspirants. From the beginning it has been a youth group. The PKK was founded as a cadre party, but from the moment it was founded, it had sympathisers, supporters, in the village, in the city, women, youth, workers, farmers, thousands more than just the members and cadres as part of it. Therefore, we should not consider the party as a narrow cadre organisation. In a way, the party is organized like a narrow cadre organisation, but the party is not only composed of cadres. It is not simply the sum of its parts, but it is the PKK because of its sympathisers and supporters. The party represents a reality that reaches millions of people. That is how it handles the organisation of society.

In the second period of the party building, the organization was called the ERNK, the National Liberation Front. Öcalan developed mass organisations within it; women's, youth and workers' organisations. In the third period, he shaped this organisation into a new body: the comprehensive system KCK. He defined and conceptualised KCK not only as a social movement, but as an organised democratic society, a democratic nation that determines its own life, shows its will to live freely, shapes its own life. Within this framework, the women's organisation was given an autonomous and unique place. The women's organisation first emerged as a branch organisation of the Third Congress in 1987. Then, in the mid-nineties, it developed a women's guerrilla, the Free Women's Associations. They saw themselves as a women's organisation. In the period before the International Plot, Öcalan tried to make it a party. He explained the women's liberation ideology. He intended to organise the women's party around such an ideological unity.

Based on the paradigm shift, he named and defined the women's party, women's defence, women's mass organisation and social work more concretely. He did the same for the autonomous youth organisation, taking into account its specificity. He defined women and youth as the organisational and practical pioneers of building the democratic nation. He also described democratic confederalism as an organising network. In other words, he defined democratic society, democratic confederalism and the democratic nation as an organised society. He considered it as a conscious, educated and organised structure, which in turn is intertwined with a thousands kinds of organisations.

In democratic socialism there is no bureaucratic organisation

Of course, the PKK is not bureaucratic. Education develops organisations, there is no organisation without education. In the PKK, nobody gets paid for their work. Recently, some people have tried to introduce this in our country. This kind of paid work is a petty bourgeois kind of work. It is the line of the KDP-YNK³. It is the line of those petty-bourgeois organisations that have tried to establish themselves in Kurdistan. In the PKK, voluntary work, sacrificial work is essential. Both the patriots⁴ and the supporters contribute to the revolutionary struggle in this way, and the professional cadres base themselves on this line. (Self-)sacrifice, voluntary work and service are important everywhere, from the PKK cadres to its supporters. This is the basic standard. The most important means to ensure this is, of course, education. The more you change people's mentality and thinking, the more you can win them over to the organisation, organise them and get them to act.

Another dimension is that the organisation exists to carry out concrete actions. In democratic socialism there is no space for a bureaucratic organisation. It is not that an organisation is built first and then its tasks are found and planned. On the contrary, the line of organisation and action of democratic socialism developed by Öcalan is functional and revolutionary. In other words, first you set the tasks, then you train people according to these tasks and use them to fulfil these tasks. When the tasks are done and new tasks arise, the organisation is renewed, it changes and restructures itself according to the tasks. The opposite of this is bureaucracy. If this does not happen, bureaucracy and a bureaucratic organisation is born. If you say, "Let's do this action" and the organisation is not aligned to that action, then it cannot implement it. So in this case, the organisation is not aligned to the action, but the action is aligned to the organisation. It becomes an organisation, one determines the work and the action according to the organisation. The line becomes the organisation. This kind of organisation, the bureaucratic organisation, is wrong through and through. It is not revolutionary and it is not functional.

³ PDK (*Partiya Demokrat a Kurdistanê*, Engl. *Democratic Party of Kurdistan*, also abbreviated KDP); founded in 1946. Since then, this southern part of Kurdistan, which today calls itself the *Autonomous Region of Kurdistan*, has been dominated by the Barzanî clan. The structures are autocratic; the government maintains the closest contacts with Turkey. YNK (*Yekîtiya Nîştîmanî ya Kurdistanê*, Engl. *Patriotic Union of Kurdistan*, also abbreviated as PUK) was founded in 1975 as a result of the split from the PDK in exile. Its headquarters are in the city of Sûlaimaniya.

⁴ *patriotic/patriot* (Kurdish: *welatparêz*, Turkish: *yurtsever*; i.e. "protecting the country" or "loving the country"): In the literature of the Kurdish movement, this term is used for supporters of the liberation struggle among the Kurdish population.

The organisational line of democratic socialism is absolutely functional and revolutionary. What does this mean? It is the shaping of the organisation according to the work, according to the revolutionary task, according to the action. It is the training of the cadres, the masses and the patriots with regard to the revolutionary tasks, with regard to the action, and the formation of an organisation on this basis. Therefore, action and practice are essential in the PKK. The organisation is necessary for its successful realisation and consciousness, will and education are necessary for the organisation to stand firm. But both education and organisation are focused on action, on practice. Action must not be understood only as armed action, it is necessary to consider all kinds of political-democratic actions.

Additionally, action must not be understood only as destructiveness and rejection of others: "The greater action is to create," said Öcalan. The most important aspect of democratic activism is positive activism, constructive activism, activism that builds. In the PKK activism, positive activism, constructive activism, constructivism, creativity are essential, at the forefront and are much stronger. It is necessary to analyse and understand actions from this perspective.

Experiences of the PKK's fifty-year struggle

What role will the PKK or the new vanguard party play in democratic socialism, in governing? The leadership is undoubtedly the will of the people. It is about organising the daily affairs of the people. Here it is more important to see the educated and organised people, society, women and youth. A system in which the people govern themselves is called a democratic system. Democratic confederalism consists of rulers which are freely and equally, fairly elected and confirmed by those who elected them. This is the self-government of the people. The vanguard Party can only give strength and support to this government. It trains and organises society and people for it, gives them experience in governing and helps them solve problems. There is no understanding of taking the whole administration into one's own hands, as in real socialism, of forming a people's administration on behalf of the people. This is also a petty-bourgeois understanding. Both the Kemalists and the Baathists in Syria and Iraq defined themselves in this way. In real socialism, the party leadership also defined itself in this way. It expressed its rule as the rule of the people. This understanding is not correct. The rule of the people must not exist in words, but must be realised in practise. Therefore, the Party should believe that the people will educate themselves; by enlightening and organising them, paving the way, gaining experience and helping them to do so. Also it should trust the educated, organised society, the people, and even if shortcomings and mistakes occur, it should approach the leadership in this way, expecting that

they can be eliminated through criticism and self-criticism. This is the right way. But they have not yet been sufficiently put into practise. We formulate them as theoretical assumptions or predictions. We formulate them as lessons from previous movements, as experiences we have gained in the past.

Here, too, we base ourselves on the lessons learnt from the experience of the PKK's fifty-year struggle. We express them on the basis of the characteristics, content and essence of the new paradigm. Öcalan said, "Society exist when it is organised." And the organisation is formed through action. Lenin and all other socialists assumed that consciousness is brought into society from outside. It is brought in by revolutionary intellectuals. The PKK was born in Kurdistan as an intellectual youth movement. The party leadership was born, developed and brought into being as an intellectual youth movement. Therefore, a force that does not educate society, that does not organise, that does not mobilise, that does not call for action, that does not lead in action cannot be called a party or a vanguard party. Certainly, someone who is not organised and active at the level of the tasks demanded by the period and line in question cannot be called a revolutionary vanguard. Neither the vanguard party is like that, nor the vanguard cadre. For this reason, Öcalan defined the cadre as "the truth that has been organised and made active". Organising it means forming it and requires activating it. He defined and formulated the unity of idea, consciousness and practise thus the unity of thought and practise accordingly.

Therefore, there can be no vanguard role of the party and cadres that does not become practical, that cannot put thoughts and revolutionary tasks into practice in time. This is called opportunism. In the past, socialists called this attitude opportunism. Now, in democratic socialism, attitudes that are not put into practice are of course also opportunism. But on the other hand, approaches that only see organisation, action and directing as themselves, that do not educate and organise people, that detach themselves from society, that put themselves in the place of society, that put their own leadership in the place of the democratic leadership of society, are not right. That is definitely not the approach of the vanguard party of democratic socialism. Nor should it be so. There can be no detachment from society. One cannot put oneself in the place of society. Making oneself the ruler in the name of the people cannot be called democratic rule of the people.

So it means that the tasks of the party or the tasks of the vanguard party in building democratic society are embodied in such education, organisation and action. But here the correct understanding is important. Of course, besides the party leadership, the guerrilla still has a leadership role for us. In the past, it was much more so. In the second phase of party building, the party and the guerrilla became one. The vanguard party was embodied in the organisation

and activism of the guerrillas. This is still partly the case today. That is why Self-Defence has a vanguard role in Kurdistan. And why? Because Kurdistan is facing genocide. Self-defence means defence against genocide. On the other hand, the women's and youth movements play a role, both in ideological and organisational leadership. Women's and youth movements play a role as a motor in building a democratic society, in developing democratic confederalism and in the emergence of popular self-government. There is also this dimension of leadership. We can look at and evaluate all of this in the context of the vanguard role.

In 20th century theories of revolution, the question of the revolutionary subject and geographies with mature objective conditions was central to the development of political strategy and tactics. How is this concept of revolutionary subject approached in the theory of democratic modernity?

Before answering this question, it is necessary to clarify, albeit briefly, the concepts of the state and revolution. In the previous questions we have tried to explain what the state is, where, when and how it arose, what it means for the development of civilisation and what kind of power or institution it is. The state is an organised power that arose out of society in the Sumerian system in Lower Mesopotamia, but it is an organised power above society, in short, an organisation of oppression and exploitation. In fact, it expresses the rupture in civilisation. It also corresponds to a deviation in the development of civilisation.

In essence, it is a deviation, a turning away from the democratic character of civilisation and the development of an alternative monopolistic-centralised civilisation in opposition to it. We can see that the state-like development in question in the period of capitalist modernity has taken the form of the nation-state, and that the nation-state is the most institutionalised, organised, society-fighting, dictatorial and exploitative form of the state. Indeed, the fascist character is evident in the nation states. More or less all nation states have a fascist character, we must also bare this in mind.

The two questions that arise here are: Why do socialists take the state, especially its nation-state phase, as the main instrument for establishing and building socialism? This is not understandable. When the state grows and deepens its character, it becomes fascism. If we look closely, it is not socialism. The dimension of dictatorship comes to the fore. The character of oppression and exploitation increases. It is not comprehensible how a revolution can be made with such a tool or how the principles of freedom, equality and participation can be realised as in socialism. It is clear that this cannot be. It can be said that real socialism did not accept this either. It considered and evaluated the transition to communism as the withering away of the state. But if we look

closely, the state did not disappear during the period when it was said that one had gone over to communism. Yes, the Soviet Union collapsed because of its own contradictions, but the extinction of the state, statelessness, democracy, democratic communalism did not emerge from it. On the contrary, it is obvious what is happening today in Russia and its neighbouring countries. Exemplary nation states have emerged in the worst form, in the form of so-called mafia states. This is the reality of the state left over from real socialism.

There is no bad or good state; a state is a state

So the idea that socialism will be built with the nation state and that the state will eventually die out has not come true. It does not make sense to still defend it, to assume that it will be so, to expect it and to act accordingly. The first thing to do is to acknowledge this reality and say goodbye to it. Why did we have to be so concerned with the state on this issue? To answer the second question. It was the definition and perception of the revolution as the destruction of a state and the establishment of a new state. It is not correct and understandable to define a revolution, which essentially means a radical, destructive, profound change and transformation, as the destruction of one state and the establishment of another. If one state was destroyed and a transition to statelessness was envisaged, perhaps one could say so. But if you look closely, this is not part of real socialism's understanding of revolution. What prevails is this: the destruction of a state and the establishment of a new state in its place, the destruction of a power and the establishment of a new power in its place. To define a state as fascist, dictatorial, exploitative, and to define one's own state as socialist, progressive, libertarian. In other words, it means saying that its state is bad and its own state is good. But there is no bad or good state, a state is a state. The essence is the same and they are all the same. Öcalan also made this clear. So much so that he expressed the integrity and continuity of the state, saying, "There is a state history from Sumer to the UN system today." Even if one state is destroyed and another is established, they are a continuation of one by the other to this day, they are not separate from each other.

On the other hand, there are different states, which differ in name and rulers, but their essence is not different. It is the way a system, a state reality arises in different geographies, the way they are named and the fact that they are ruled by different rulers. Otherwise, their essence is the same. The state is one. It has branches in different areas in different eras. Today, the states find their unity in the UN and continue to rule the earth as some 200 branches. They have divided up the earth, i.e. the world. They do not leave an inch of land outside the sovereignty of the states.

Now the overthrow of such a state and the founding of another state, the

change of its name and the change of its ruler are not very radical changes. The essence and character of the state do not change. This has happened again and again and no deep change has been seen. They are building a new state on the remains of the previous one, and although there are some changes, it is essentially its continuation. This has been called a revolution. Now the concept of revolution cannot be expressed in this way. Revolution expresses a very radical, qualitative change. If we look closely, the destruction of a state and the building of a new state is not a qualitative change. It is a quantitative change. So it is not a revolution, but an evolution. There is an evolution from one state to another. But an overthrow, i.e. a revolution, does not take place. The revolution is a change of essence, a change of quality. In this respect, our constant mention and evaluation of the state is actually rooted in defining the reality of revolution correctly and intelligibly.

The more ideological change there is in an upheaval, the more revolution takes place

So what is a revolution? It is a qualitative change, a fundamental change and transformation. What do we mean by a qualitative change, a radical change? We understand a change of mentality, an ideological change. We have to give the answer in this way. Qualitative change means ideological change. It means a change of lifestyle. It means a change in the principles and standards of life. That is indeed qualitative change, and that is how revolution occurs. The more ideological change there is in an upheaval, the more revolution takes place. In other words, very intense destruction and reconstruction can take place. If this does not change the quality or changes it very little, if the old quality is rebuilt with new means, then this is not called revolutionary change, then this event is definitely not called revolution. The fact that something can be a revolution depends on a change in quality, i.e. an ideological change. To the extent that change takes place in the transition from one ideology to another ideological situation, this change can be called a revolution.

Undoubtedly, ideological change has a mental dimension, a political-moral dimension, principles and standards. Ideology is not synonymous with theory. Nor is it the accumulation of very abstract knowledge. Ideology can be defined in a narrower sense as principles and standards of life. In this respect it is concrete, vital, principled. First of all, it is necessary to understand the concepts of state and revolution correctly and to ascribe to them correct and sufficient meanings. In order to correctly understand the question posed, we must first clarify these terms in this way.

On the other hand, it would be useful to briefly define the terms “revolutionary subject” and “objective conditions”. With revolutionary subject, if we want to

keep it compatible with the other term, we can express subjective conditions. In another definition, this was also called subjective conditions. Therefore, these two terms used to be defined as subjective and objective conditions. From the perspective of a revolutionary movement, they can also be called internal and external conditions. Subjective conditions, i.e. the revolutionary subject, the level of development of the revolutionary vanguard, the ideological and organisational line. The level of formation and development of a revolutionary movement is expressed in the mentality, theory, programme, ideology, strategy and tactics, organisation and power of action. Undoubtedly, a minimum level of revolutionary subject is necessary for the realisation of revolutionary changes in a place. In other words, subjective conditions must be created. The revolutionary vanguard, i.e. the vanguard of the party, must become visible.

28 The objective conditions are mostly conditions outside the movement, the party or the vanguard. In other words, the state of the system to be fought; the economic, social, cultural, military-political structure, the internal contradictions, the level of conflict caused by these contradictions, the crisis-chaos situation. These are defined as objective conditions. If we look closely, these are the conditions outside the revolutionary movement itself.

The revolutionary theories of the 20th century

On the basis of these definitions, we can now answer the question at hand. It is well known that the theories of revolution in the 20th century intended to overthrow the existing state in some area and establish a new state in its place; in this case the state of the working class or the proletariat. Revolutionary consciousness, organisation and action served this purpose exclusively. The question of power, the seizure of power, and for this purpose the destruction of the existing state structure and the establishment of a new one was determined as the goal.

According to this understanding of revolution, in order to carry out a revolution in one area, i.e., in order to overthrow the existing state and establish a new state, the internal contradictions of the existing state had to deepen, its crisis, chaos and internal conflicts had to increase. When a state was weakened in this way, only then could a struggle with destructive activity be waged against it. Otherwise, if the internal contradictions of a state are limited, if they are small, if the rupture between the state and society is not large, if the contradictions of the social segments with the state are limited, if their opposition is weak, if the conflict between different power blocs remains at a limited level, in short, if the state is in a situation where it cannot be destroyed with such ordinary blows, then one would say that there is no revolutionary situation there. In other words, it was not considered possible that the state could be overthrown by

revolutionary action at that time and under those conditions. Therefore, it was said that there was no revolutionary situation in these areas, that the phase was not a period of revolutionary struggle, but a period of construction work, and the strategies were set accordingly, and the construction work was considered fundamental.

The transition to revolutionary action and the development of the strategy and tactics of revolutionary action, on the other hand, would have been based on the development of the strategies and tactics of revolutionary action in areas with many internal contradictions. Where the contradictions between the power blocs have deepened, where society and the state are divided, where the social opposition develops in different forms against the state, against different power blocs, where workers, labourers, women, youth rise up, i.e. where the struggle of all oppressed against the power and the state increases, where the state is weak, its internal contradictions, its crisis and chaos are profound, there is a revolutionary situation. Therefore, revolutionary strategy and tactics are taken as a basis. The revolutionary vanguard, that is, the party, can fight with the strategy and tactics in question and achieve results when it turns to revolutionary war or insurrection to overthrow the state. It can overthrow the state and thus create the basis for the establishment of a new state. In short, it has been defined as having made a revolution.

In other words, when the revolution was defined as the overthrow of a state and the establishment of a new state, the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle were concretised in terms of whether or not they could overthrow the state, that is, whether or not they could create the conditions for the establishment of a new state. For this reason, there were indeed intense debates within the socialist movement in this framework. We can say, for example, that a significant intellectual disagreement developed on this basis at the beginning of the 20th century. Some currents, assuming that the crisis and chaos were increasing and that the contradictions were deepening in the areas where capitalism was developing the most, said that the socialist struggle would develop there and that revolutions would develop mainly in these countries. On the other hand, some socialists argued that in the areas where the capitalist system of exploitation was developed, the system was much stronger; where it was less developed, it was in a weaker position, its crisis and depression were deeper, the state was weaker. Therefore, it was easier to wage a revolutionary struggle against the state and to develop the struggle to overthrow the state in these areas. The Russian Bolsheviks, for example, valued the latter thesis. For this reason, they put forth the revolution move eastwards, revolutionary struggle intensifying in the semi-colonial countries, and that the national liberation revolutions come to the fore and develop as part of the socialist revolutions. They developed this as an understanding and a theory. On the other hand, the

more social-democratically defined currents declared that the socialist struggle would develop in the areas of Europe that had achieved capitalist development.

It should be noted that the social democratic movement could not achieve a very serious development in line with its own theory. However, there were very important and serious developments in line with the theory of the Bolshevik movement, especially in the 20th century, both between the two world wars and after the Second World War. Important developments took place in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Many states were crushed by uprisings or protracted revolutionary wars of national liberation and guerrilla struggles. New states were established in their place. But what was the result? It is quite clear that these states, which were established as socialist or independent states, reconciled themselves with the ruling and state-oriented system of the UN in the process. They became a part of it. They turned to all kinds of relations and cooperation with the states with which they had previously fought wars. It has turned out that they are not very different from them in essence. They do differ in some ways, but not in essence, but in form, in different areas of life. They are within the framework of some social reforms. Otherwise, there is no qualitative change, no ideological change.

In fact, with these two practices, the revolutionary theories of the 20th century proved themselves incorrect; the idea that socialism is built with the state, and the contradicting definition of socialist revolution as the destruction of a state and the building of a new state. This is one of the most fundamental practical conclusions from the experience of the 20th century. Therefore, it makes no sense to call a state a capitalist state or a socialist state. A state is a state. Adding the terms capitalist or socialist to it does not change the nature of these states. On the contrary, they even reveal the impracticability of socialism.

The question of the revolutionary vanguard in the construction of democratic modernity

Having thus subjected these concepts to a critical evaluation, we can now turn to the question of the revolutionary avant-garde or how to deal with the subjective and objective conditions in the construction of democratic modernity. First of all, it should be noted that apolitical theory is not detached from space and time. In criticising and trying to overcome dogmatic dialectics, it has indeed tried to develop the true essence of dialectics. Within this framework, it attaches importance to the concepts of time and space. Certainly does not believe that time and space have no impact on social life. It is necessary to know that. However, it does not divide current conditions or the current world situation into geographies with mature objective conditions and geographies without such conditions.

Rather, apoist theory appreciates that capitalism, by its nature, due to the principle of exploitation, contains contradictions and that it experiences crises and depressions. For this reason, any time and place can offer suitable possibilities and opportunities for revolutionary work. Again, it does not repeat a mistake that real socialism fell into in the past. For example, it does not find correct the view that socialist conditions, socialist life, socialist ideology can only develop when capitalism has been very strong, capitalist exploitation has been experienced in its most profound form, and that socialism cannot be built by fighting against capitalist exploitation where capitalist exploitation is low. In other words, real socialism said that socialism can only be built after overcoming capitalism. Therefore, if there is no capitalism, if there is feudalism in any part of the country, one cannot move to socialism - one must first move to capitalism and only after capitalism can one move to socialism. In the period of real socialism, many movements developed on this basis. Even at that time, Öcalan did not think these ideas were right. Since he was of the opinion that socialism is not such a form of state, he considered the approach that socialist conditions can only be experienced after capitalism and that people cannot experience socialism without capitalism to be extremely wrong, dogmatic and simple-minded. On the contrary, from the very beginning, he foresaw, defended, built on and realised in practise that a socialist party can be founded in Kurdistan, that socialist conditions can develop, that socialist people, cadres, parties and struggles can emerge. The historical development has confirmed these thoughts and practises of Öcalan.

In short, in the apoist theory of revolution, there is no distinction between objective conditions, mature geographies and geographies that have not yet reached this state. In all geographies, there are objective conditions that are necessary for revolutionary work, organisation, struggle and development. Öcalan said that wherever the system of power and state prevails, where oppression and exploitation are experienced, it is possible to struggle for freedom, equality based on diversity, democracy and participation. This is called revolutionary work and struggle. In this sense, it does not ask whether the objective conditions are ripe or not, whether revolutionary work can be done here or not. The system of oppression and domination is not of the same content and on the same level with the same methods everywhere. There can be changes. The conditions that we call objective conditions are not the same everywhere. They have differences. In one place they are present with different methods and forms, in another place they are different in nature. Therefore, it is impossible not to take them into account. The apoist theory of revolution, the theory of democratic modernity envisages taking them into account. It thinks and believes that it is necessary to see these differences, to analyse the concrete situation accordingly and to develop the nature, method and form of revolutionary work accordingly.

The apoist theory of revolution: the revolution has a beginning, but there is no real end

32

Apoist revolutionary theory develops its own forms of revolutionary work, strategic-tactical approaches, styles and methods creatively, in a way that anticipates these situations and the differences experienced. It certainly does not have such a rigid, dogmatic idea that the same thing is done everywhere. That is definitely an important point. On this basis, the subjective conditions can develop everywhere, provided they put themselves into practice according to the concrete conditions and with creative approaches, and the revolutionary vanguard can emerge with its theory, programme, ideology, strategy and tactics, organisation and action. The theory of democratic modernity also envisages this. In this sense, it envisages that the revolutionary vanguard can organise itself everywhere, carry out revolutionary work and struggles, develop itself on the basis of the formation and organisation of society, create party organisation and party leadership, and develop the life of the free individual democratic commune bit by bit according to the standards of democratic modernity by forming and organising society in appropriate areas. This theory views revolution as a change in such a way of life and ideology. It assumes that a personality revolution has taken place when a person is educated and their mentality and way of life can be changed. If the mentality and way of life of a certain social circle are changed through education in the direction of democratic socialism by breaking away from individualism, and if democratic communal life can be developed at various levels, then it assumes that a revolution has taken place there, that a democratic modernity has been built, that a democratic society or a democratic nation has been developed.

In fact, Öcalan considers the revolutionary work and struggle as a work and development on this basis. If we look closely, there is no destruction of the state here. But this discourse does not mean that there is no struggle against the state. There is a struggle against the state, but at what level? It envisages limiting and restricting the state, limiting the influence of the state on society in terms of consciousness, organisation and life, and instead developing the measures and principles of democratic modernity, the political-moral life of society as an alternative life. In this respect, he does not speak of revolution and revolutionary development developing one hundred percent at a stroke. After the revolutionary work, the revolution can develop by one per cent, it can develop by five per cent. It depends on the formation and organisation of society and its involvement in the life of the free individual and the democratic commune. Sometimes the revolutionary change may be thirty per cent, the democratic nation may develop thirty per cent, the national state may remain seventy per cent, and there will be a constant struggle between these two forces. In this

respect, the revolution is already underway. Democratic modernity already exists. The elements of democratic modernity are trying to protect their own existence. They are fighting for it. The revolution consists of them becoming a little more conscious, organised and planned. In this sense, we can speak of a revolutionary beginning, after which the revolution is a continuous development. For example, if we restrict, limit, encircle and weaken the state system and gradually go to the elimination of the state, and suppose that the state is destroyed in this way, then the revolution will not end, but the continuous development of society in terms of mind, emotions, consciousness and behaviour on the line of the free individual and the democratic commune will continue. Therefore, the revolution will be continuous, says Öcalan. There is a continuous revolutionary approach. The revolution has a beginning, but there is no real end.

In fact, there is no such thing as a defeat of the revolution. It can regress, it can develop, it can strengthen, but there is neither its absolute victory nor its absolute defeat. Democratic self-governments develop on the basis of society. They represent democratic modernity. State governments exist everywhere, they represent the state. The state and the revolution, the nation state and the democratic nation, that is, capitalist modernity and democratic modernity, live in a situation of constant contradiction and conflict. According to the apolitical theory of revolution: revolutionary work and struggle are like this. This expresses a new approach.

Then the problem becomes this: To correctly understand the existing system of power and state, to correctly understand and define democratic society against it, to bring capitalist modernity and, as an alternative to it, democratic modernity to our consciousness, to recognise the contradiction and struggle between them and to enable ourselves to lead a struggle that limits, weakens and defeats the effects of capitalist modernity and to develop the measures and principles of democratic modernity through education and organisation in societies. With this way the subjective conditions of revolution become alive, visible and put into practise. When there is a revolutionary mentality that understands the present situation, when it detaches itself from the order and the system and on this basis turns to the struggle against the system within the system, creating a development that multiplies and grows and transforms into a community and society with new people; this ensures the development of democratic society, democratic nation and the emergence of a democratic self-government system. We call this a revolutionary development. Öcalan said that the most important revolution in the Kurdistan freedom movement is the revolution of personality. He said that when a person breaks away from the system of capitalist modernity and lives according to the principles of democratic modernity, they make a revolution. Today a revolution with one person, tomorrow a revolution with ten people, the day after tomorrow a revolution of thirty people; he makes it clear

that the revolution of democratic modernity will develop on this basis and that the forces of democratic modernity should carry out their revolutionary work according to these principles.

As a result, there is no similar approach to objective and subjective conditions as in the 20th century. This is because the perception, understanding and approach to the state and revolution are different. The theory of democratic modernity expresses a new theory of revolution. According to this new theory of revolution, there are conditions everywhere to do revolutionary work and make progress. As long as revolution is correctly understood and seen as ideological struggle, ideological change and development. As long as the ways and methods of revolutionary struggle are approached creatively. There must be willingness, conviction and strong will to work on this point. A revolutionary vanguard can emerge everywhere, albeit at different levels, the revolution presents itself in the revolutionary vanguard, and the revolutionary vanguard can multiply constantly. In other words, it can develop the organisation of the democratic nation through a constant struggle. When conditions are more favourable, when it finds more suitable methods, when it struggles effectively and successfully, it can lead to rapid developments and spread. Its influence on society increases. Thus, the democratic self-government system develops and democratic modernity is strengthened in society. Capitalist modernity is also pushed back. When the elements of capitalist modernity carry out devastating attacks, it is resisted on the basis of self-defence. If it weakens in resistance, it may be hit, retreat and shrink. However, if it breaks through the attacks, it can achieve faster development and reveal a level of development that is better accepted by the masses. The new theory of revolution and its degree of realisation, as well as its approach to the objective and subjective conditions, can be summarised like this.

Abdullah Öcalan defines the class question as an inner-civilisational contradiction and therefore states that it is not the only dynamic in social history. Rather, he emphasises that the main contradiction is between the forces of the central civilisation and the anti-civilisational forces (the peoples, ethnic groups, women, etc.). Nevertheless, today we are confronted with the reality that capitalist modernity is a global system and that economic exploitation (i.e., the class question) is a defining reality for an overwhelming part of humanity. What role does the class question play in democratic modernity? What relevance should this question have in the political strategy of anti-systemic forces?

It is true that Öcalan treats the class question in the context of monopolistic civilisation and considers it an internal problem. But if we look closely, he does

not reject classes. He does not say that there are no classes under the system of monopolistic civilisation and that therefore there is no class contradiction and class struggle. On the contrary, he accepts this and explains it further. He says the following: Class formation has developed on the basis of the city in the context of monopolistic civilisation. It has developed as an inner element of monopolistic civilisation. Therefore, class, state and power have developed as intertwined, mutually reinforcing and complementary elements. Therefore, there are classes, class contradictions and struggles in the monopolistic civilisation. This is an open and obvious struggle. This must be seen and evaluated correctly by the revolutionary movements.

Within this framework, he also criticises the following: For example, he says that “the definition of the basic contradiction and struggle as class contradiction and struggle is not correct”. This is because classes emerged in the Sumerian system around four thousand BC. They have existed in the six or seven thousand years since. But societies existed before that. Social life existed before that. But there were no classes there. So the fundamental dynamic of social development is not class contradiction and class struggle. If this is the case, then we cannot answer the questions of what the dynamics of social development were before Sumer and on what basis the development took place.

On the other hand, societies cannot be expressed or characterised by classes. We know that definitions of society such as slave society, feudal society, capitalist society have been developed. However, Öcalan describes these as inaccurate. There were societies without slaves, feudal lords and capitalists. The pre-Sumerian societies were like that. In other words, it is also not correct to name the social structure with the existing classes. Class definitions alone do not express society, nor historical society in the most general sense. For example, to speak of a slave society is not to define the relations of that society, the reality of society. Society is not created by the existence of slaves. It does not consist of them. That is why he developed the concept of political and moral society. He stated that society is created on the basis of the connection of individuals through politics and morality and that the social structure is formed in this way. He defined politics and morality as the basic elements that determine society. He linked the degree of social development or regression to the degree of functioning of politics and morality in a society. The more effective politics and morality are in a society, the more they function, he called it a developed society. The weaker and weaker the functioning of political and moral institutions, the more backward a society. Social decay and extinction for him meant the complete dysfunctionalisation and destruction of the institutions of politics and morality. Now, these were undoubtedly very important definitions and assessments. We should definitely take these definitions into account when analysing the social structure and class reality.

This means that it is not correct to begin social existence with class and to define it through class struggle. Societies also existed before the emergence of classes. There are also struggles that societies wage and fight outside of the class struggle. In short, class contradiction and struggle is of course an important contradiction, an important struggle. Under capitalism it becomes much more active and deeper. That is true. But despite all this, classes are never the determining factor of society, and the class struggle is not the fundamental dynamic of social development.

So what is the fundamental difference? It is the difference between the forces of the central monopoly civilisation and the forces of the democratic civilisation. The fundamental, decisive struggle is the struggle between these two forces. We have to understand this as the fundamental dynamic of historical development. Seen in this way, the class problem is not a problem of fundamental contradiction. However, it is one of the social problems created by the power and state system and deepened by capitalist modernity. It is an important problem. This class domination becomes much more effective especially in the period of the emergence of the bourgeois class, its seizure of power, the structuring of the nation state and the desired domination of society in all dimensions. Öcalan assessed this in his defence writings. In the past there was only one king, today every bourgeois has become a king in his own place. Tens of thousands of kings have emerged. Therefore, the bourgeois order of rule has become a heavy burden that societies cannot bear. One king has become ten thousand kings. The system of oppression and exploitation has become so widespread and generalised.

Öcalan also discusses the class problem together with the problem of bureaucracy and makes it clear that the present bourgeois class formation with the huge bureaucracy it has developed has become an intolerable and unbearable burden on society.

On the other hand, class struggle undoubtedly occupies an important place in the political strategy of the anti-system forces. Nobody can deny this. What Öcalan wants to express and clarify is not that this should be denied or not seen, but on the contrary, that such struggle should be seen as a fundamental, determining struggle. In other words, to see the class struggle as a struggle that determines the revolutionary development, that leads the revolutionary struggle to a result, to victory, is not correct, it is an insufficient definition. Because if one class destroys the other class, it also destroys itself. What will emerge then? Many things that are claimed and conceptually developed are contradictory in themselves.

Öcalan pointed out these contradictions and said that the class struggle should not be approached in this way. Firstly, there are still class contradictions and conflicts. There are still classes. Even though there are changes compared to the past, even though the gap between the working class and the bourgeoisie is different from the class gap of previous eras, even though the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working class has changed on a global scale, the class structure in question, the class contradiction and the struggle caused by it still exist. The ruling class, the bourgeoisie, together with the bureaucracy, has enlarged, expanded and aggravated the state to such an extent that it has swallowed up the whole of society. The burden of such a state not only cannot be borne by the workers, but also by no one else. In this sense, we must see the class struggle as an important struggle.

On the other hand, since the mid-19th century, real socialism has had a practice based on class contradiction and class struggle. This has led to major historical developments in thought, organisation and action. Marxist-Leninist thought has developed. Workers' parties, social democratic parties and communist parties emerged. These parties tried to lead society for a long time. In addition, the October Socialist Revolution took place in Russia in the autumn of 1917 and the Soviet Union was founded. This development spread to the whole world, to Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and America. Dozens of states emerged as so-called socialist states. They formed political-military-ideological alliances and pacts among themselves. They created alliances of power. They shaped events, phenomena and developments in a particular period of history. From the 1920s to the 1990s, they were the determining factor for developments in this seventy-year period of history. They have created a significant legacy. There is a great legacy in terms of thought, practice, party organisation, trade unions, workers organisations, various institutions, understanding and style of struggle. Although this heritage has suffered a heavy blow with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the developments that have emerged in terms of thinking and material institutionalisation have suffered a considerable decline and regression, they are still a reality and retain their influence at various levels. They continue to exist as a very important heritage. Therefore, we need to see this reality.

What role can these achievements now play in the revolution of democratic modernity or in the construction of democratic modernity? This question also arises for us. How can we make them effective in the present period, in the process of building a democratic nation? This is the most important question we have to ask ourselves and answer. Firstly, is it possible or not? On the other hand, if it is realised, what developments will it lead to? We have to ask similar questions and formulate answers.

To sum up on this issue, if they can be involved in such a struggle, they will of course play an important role. Because it (the Marxist-Leninist movement) was the most revolutionary current in recent history. It supported all currents, united them within itself. It drew all revolutionary struggles and developments into itself. In this respect, it has a great heritage. Is it possible to use this heritage to build democratic modernity? Yes, it is possible. But it cannot do so by maintaining its present mentality structure, theoretical conception, ideological stance, understanding, strategy and tactics of struggle. Only if there are significant changes in these areas can these forces play an important and effective role in building democratic modernity. In this regard, the main task is to change and transform these developments and socialist achievements through criticism and self-criticism. In other words, by seriously evaluating the reasons for the disintegration of real socialism, subjecting them to critique-self-criticism, exposing their mistakes and shortcomings and correcting them in mentality, organisation and style of struggle, a correction of understanding and style must be realised in this field, which will enable the class struggle to gain importance and lead to victory together with the struggle of other social segments.

It is necessary to develop the critique carefully in order to be a guide for the necessary change and transformation by exposing the faults and shortcomings as well as the positive. It is never right and acceptable to reject it completely; in reality there is nothing to reject, rather, it is an expression of an important period and station in the development of socialist consciousness and action. It is a lived reality. We cannot accept it as it is, nor can we ignore it or pass it over. It is therefore a question of realising a change and transformation that incorporates this great heritage of humanity into the new process through critique and self-criticism and makes it an element in the construction of democratic modernity.

Therefore, it is necessary to approach real socialism attentively and to grasp it correctly. It can neither be rejected, denied, condemned from the outset, nor can it be accepted as it was. Because this style leads nowhere. No results can be achieved with this mentality and style. Both the October Revolution and the national liberation movements were products of a historical period. Now that period is over and the conditions for the development and success of such movements have disappeared. The possibility and the opportunities have disappeared. This is a clear fact. In this regard, it is necessary not to reject them a priori, but to criticise them on a revolutionary basis, to work out their self-criticism, to contribute to the change and transformation of the mentality and style of the real socialist forces and to try to realise them. Öcalan has led a great struggle in this direction.

He criticised real socialism with an extremely content-rich, linguistically comprehensible and stylistically convincing approach. In fact, he considered

this the strongest self-criticism of the freedom movement in history. On this basis, he made a paradigm shift. In doing so, he paved the way for the victory of the freedom movements. For if we look at the historical past, they either could not achieve victory or could not make their victory last. Despite all its power, real socialism could only last for a maximum of seventy years. And why? Because it was riddled with internal contradictions. In other words, there was no unity of purpose and means, there was no harmony. The means they envisaged for building socialism were not compatible with the principles of freedom, equality and sharing. On the contrary, they were in complete contradiction with each other. This internal contradiction led to real socialism disintegrating from within, without any serious external pressure. This is a very clear and understandable situation. It is necessary to expose it, to help and stimulate the forces concerned to change and transform themselves in mentality and style through criticism and self-criticism, overcoming dogmatism and formalism, and to make cooperative efforts for this.

Due to the asynchronicity of capitalist modernity, we have, on the one hand, a working class in the Global North that has largely lost its identity and thus its subjectivity and occupies a privileged position within the capitalist world system (working class aristocracy). On the other hand, in a large part of the world we are confronted with an economic exploitation that knows no limits in its extent and brutality. The workers in the imperialist centres participate to a large extent in the surplus value that is squeezed out of the colonies. They thus benefit materially and objectively from this global order. Is it therefore still possible today to speak of a global working class? And how can a common struggle look against the backdrop of these different interests?

This question is actually also a kind of answer to the previous question. In other words, it shows that the view that the basic contradiction is the class contradiction and therefore the struggle that makes history, the struggle that creates history, is the struggle between classes, is not correct. If we look closely, at the point we have reached today, as stated in the question, there is no united working class. Certainly, we cannot speak of the existence of a working class with a common character and common characteristics at the global level. But this does not mean that just because there is no unified working class at the global level, there is no class contradiction in society and therefore the working class as a class does not exist. It is certainly not to be understood that way. Class contradictions and class struggle still exist, even if not in a unified form.

The workers aristocracy also has certain contradictions to the existing order. Undoubtedly, however, these are not at the level of the contradictions and thus the struggle of the working class, which is far more oppressed and exploited and lives below the hunger line. But they too have contradictions with the existing

order and fight in their own interest. We can also consider them as one. We can also say that they are a group that has split off from the working class. But they are still a stratum and they have contradictions and struggles with the order. Such a fragmentation in the working class can be observed because of the current developments. That is a fact. But there is still a working class outside the imperialist centres that is ruthlessly exploited. In some parts of Asia, America, Africa, there is such class exploitation. There is such a class structure. They are a power on a global scale. There is definitely a worker aristocracy. But the idea that the working class has become weak and ineffective just because it is fragmented should not be taken as a basis.

40 Nor should the statement that the class struggle is not the motor of history be attributed to the fragmentation of the working class in the present situation. Even if it were not so fragmented, the struggle of the working class still could not be defined as the fundamental struggle of history. Indeed, in the industrially developed areas of the world in earlier centuries, there was such a working class and the struggle of the working class was very effective. But still, this struggle was not the defining factor of history. For there was no new order that could be created by it. There could be no such order as that of the working class. The working class existed against the bourgeoisie. Since with the destruction of the bourgeoisie, the worker themselves also disappears, the structures defined as the order of the working class are not real. These concepts do not express reality, they are concepts that look like agitation. Therefore, we should not deceive ourselves.

The fact that the struggle of the working class is a struggle that cannot determine the historical struggle alone is linked to the emergence of classes, their historical existence, their position in the social struggle. It is linked above all to its own strength. It is linked to its own structure. In other words, we have to see this; for example, the theory of value of labour is examined. Selling one's labour power for a wage is called freedom. This has nothing to do with reality. It is not possible to perceive the sale of one's labour power for a wage as true freedom. Rather, this corresponds to the petty-bourgeois understanding of freedom. However, work is the most sacred thing for human beings. Öcalan also said: "The most fundamental work is the work of the mother, which is also sacred. It cannot be put a price on." If the mother's work is a reality and cannot be paid for, then it means that the work itself is sacred. The work cannot be paid for, so it cannot be sold for a wage. This cannot be called freedom. This is just like Lenin's statement that "in the name of freedom they have robbed the whole world through trade". It certainly does not correspond to the truth.

In this case, the struggle of a real working class should not be for more wages and should not tie its aim and style to raising wages. Suppose the working class

raises its wage and becomes a little richer. Will this solve the problems of the working class? Will capitalist exploitation be eliminated? Will society be able to live freely and be governed democratically? No. The workers concerned will have improved their material life a little more, that's all. Beyond that, there is no further benefit. With the struggle of workers who have strengthened their material life a little bit, we cannot overcome the capitalist order of exploitation and build and develop an alternative to it. This is not what this struggle can look like. This means that the working class does not have this character. Its place in society is not at this level. On the other hand, this question of wages, of working for wages, of fighting for wages, of fighting for higher wages is a struggle that does not create or reveal socialist achievements. What socialist achievements can come out of it? Be careful, evaluate properly, how can we speak of socialist achievements on this basis? This is how we should see the basic features and character of the struggle of the working class.

Nevertheless, we must stress the following: Yes, the working class is fragmented, there is a working aristocracy, there is no unity within the class, there are differences. But there is still a working class. Even if it is fragmented, even if its position on the ground is different in different countries, there is a working class. There is also, for example, an army of the unemployed. It goes far beyond the working class, and this army of the unemployed also forms a global unit. It is even called a non-class element. They live in a position that is shifting more and more towards being a lumpenproletariat, detached from social life and threatening the future. This is certainly the most fundamental problem.

On the other hand, there are women as the oldest class in history. Öcalan said about women: "They are the oldest nation, class and gender". This is how he assessed the male-dominated mentality and policies towards women, i.e. the enslavement of women. This is the situation to which women have been reduced by the sexual ruptures they have experienced historically. In this sense, the greatest work is the work of the mother, but it is not counted as work. It is the mother who does this work, so the woman is not even considered a worker. There are young people who are in a similar situation. They are hopeless about their future and cannot foresee a proper and effective future for themselves. On the other hand, there is an army of new immigrants. Throughout history, there have been migratory movements. Such movements have occurred both for natural reasons and because of the exploitative structures of the power and state system. But now we have what can really be called an army of migrants who are like cheap labour. They cannot become workers, they cannot overcome unemployment, this is a serious problem.

In conclusion, we can only state the following: Just as there is no integrated working class at the global level, it is difficult to develop a common struggle

of the working class at the global level. Although there are those who claim to have developed such a struggle, they have not been able to bring about any serious development so far. As interests are different, struggles will undoubtedly be different. Organisational structures and organisational situations will also be different. Against this situation of the working class, for example, women represent a more integrated stance. Although divided into different classes within itself, the women's liberation struggle nevertheless represents a more integrated situation. The army of the unemployed and the struggle of the youth and migrants are closer to unity. Most importantly, the struggle of the working class, when considered together with the struggle of the anti-systemic forces and the elements of democratic civilisation, can also lead to an important result. It can be considered as a force. It cannot be considered as a struggle that alone leads to successful results. It cannot be seen only at the global level, nor only at the level of countries and nations. There is absolutely no such function.

But the working class can play an important role by participating in the struggle of anti-systemic forces for the construction of democratic modernity. As an element of democratic modernity, it can be seen as an important force for building democratic modernity, against the system as a force suppressed by the system. The struggle of the working class requires restructuring at the trade union level in different forms on the basis of new goals. If this restructuring is carried out, it can actually play an important role and force in building democratic modernity with new style organisations. On this basis, we have to approach the struggle of the working class and look at it accordingly. In other words, we have to realise changes and transformations in terms of aims, forms of organisation, styles of struggle and methods. There must be change and transformation in all these aspects. The working class cannot participate in the struggle for building a democratic modernity with the old trade union organisations and understandings and cannot take an effective place in this struggle with the old understandings and styles. But when there are changes and transformations, when the organisational style and approach are changed and transformed, it can play a very important role in the construction of democratic modernity. In this construction, it can have a practice that contributes to the fulfilment of political-moral duties as a basic segment of society. Our approach to these groups in the process we are in and our effort to involve them in the struggle should be based on this.

About the Academy of Democratic Modernity

As the Academy of Democratic Modernity, we strive to communicate the ideas and richness of experience of the Kurdistan Freedom Movement and its paradigm of democratic modernity. Our publications aim to initiate joint discussions with activists, academics and various anti-systemic and social movements in order to move forward in our search for radical alternatives to capitalist modernity and the realisation of a free life. Through our educational work, we want to create a new understanding of democratic politics, social enlightenment and a new political-moral consciousness. We address social issues such as: democratic autonomy, the intertwining of lines of resistance, sociology of freedom, women's liberation, youth autonomy, social ecology, communal economy and art & culture. Through the development of platforms and networks, we aim to contribute to the strengthening of an international exchange of experiences and to interweave existing struggles in the sense of democratic world confederalism. Overcoming capitalist modernity requires concrete local and global institutional alternatives. If we succeed in expanding democratic politics in everyday life - through alliances, councils, communes, cooperatives, academies - the huge political power of society will unfold and be used to solve social problems. In this sense, we see our activities as a contribution to the unfolding of democratic modernity and democratic socialism.

Let us work together to bring our visions and utopias to life. Another world is not only possible - given the world situation, it is sorely needed. Let's start building our future world together in the present, because waiting would be madness.

More information in German, Spanish, English and Italian can be found here <https://democraticmodernity.com>

So when we speak of democratic modernity, we do not use this term instead of democratic socialism. Democratic modernity and democratic socialism are intertwined. In other words, democratic socialism is given life by democratic modernity and becomes a practice through it. Democratic modernity paves the way for democratic socialism. It enables the realisation of democratic socialism.



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