



**KCK - KURDISTAN DEMOCRATIC
COMMUNITIES UNION**



INTERVIEW

Democratic Confederalism

Interview with Xebat Andok, member of the KCK Executive Council, about the tenets of Democratic Confederalism, its practical implementation today and the solution this system represents for the problems caused by capitalist modernity.

We have been organizing ourselves under the umbrella of the Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union (KCK) since 2005. Organized in different areas of life – economy, culture, self-defense, law, social life, diplomacy, politics – we strive to support and build structures of self-administration in all four parts of Kurdistan and the Kurdish diaspora. All our member organizations come together under the roof of the `People`s Congress` (Kongra Gel) which constitutes our highest decision-making institution. Thus, even under the hardships of war and colonial state policy we work everyday to put our vision of a self-governed, just and sustainable society into practice.

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What is Democratic Confederalism?

Democratic Confederalism is a system in which democratic society becomes organized. It is not a movement or a party, but constitutes a social system. It can be applicable to Kurdistan as well as Turkey, Iraq, Iran or Syria. Looking at it from an even more general perspective, it can also be applied to the Middle East as a whole, Europe, America and Africa. The KCK [Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union] represents the Democratic Confederalism of Kurdistan. The same can be possible in Iran, Iraq, Syria or any other country. If all the peoples, ethnicities, cultural groups, religious beliefs, etc. in the Middle East, in short, all of society and all peoples in the Middle East, want to take such a system as a basis, then it is possible to establish this kind of confederalism throughout the Middle East. For example under the name 'Middle East Democratic Peoples Confederalism' or any other name. It is also possible to establish similar systems in America, Europe, Africa or another continent. If this system is established on a global scale, we could refer to it as the 'World Democratic Peoples Confederalism'. It is a system in which all segments of society, from local to universal, from small to large, organize themselves and establish their self-administrations.

We could refer to what you just said as the general definition of Democratic Confederalism. But what is its content?

Since this is an alternative system to the existing nation-states and the ruling state system in general, it is based on and defends the organization of the people and society as a whole. It is important to note that it consists of two basic words: One is democratic/democracy and the other is confederalism. Confederalism is a very flexible system of relations based on voluntarism. It does not include any form of written constitution. It does not involve obligation. The unions formed within this system are entirely voluntary, just like the decision to separate from it.

Who comes together on the basis of the flexibility and voluntarism you just mentioned?

Demos, the people. Society can consist of many different ethnic communities, religious beliefs, cultural groups, men and women, any organization that has come together to solve any problem of society, etc. In short, on this basis, all segments of society, the demos, the people, govern themselves. They are the ones who govern. They are not ruled by outsiders, by hegemony. It is a system where all social segments come together in the context of confederal relations on the basis of a system of self-administration. This has two foundations:

- All segments of society need to become organized.
- All parts of this organized society need to be in a relationship with each other.

Their form of relationship constitutes confederalism. There is no space for any relationships based on oppression, force or ideological hegemony. It is a union established on an equal and free basis. This is its confederal dimension.

Another crucial point is that it has to be an organized community. When we speak about all the segments of society, this can mean even the smallest units and all identities or ethnic groups. They organize themselves autonomously on the basis of an understanding of local democracy and come together on the basis of a confederal relationship in order to establish a stronger unity. Therefore, Democratic Confederalism is a system in which all social segments in Kurdistan, the region and around the world organize themselves and at the same time, by establishing relations with each other, organize together as a society outside of the state. This is a local as well as a universal system of social organization. It is a system of social organization that is applicable to Kurdistan as well as to the Middle East, the whole world, all the peoples and the oppressed people of the world.

How does this form of democratic organization and organized democratic society come about?

We are not talking about an organizational system based on a centrally managed parliamentary system. This system is completely different from all existing forms of state. It starts from the smallest unit, for example, a village, a street, street organizations, village organizations or factory organizations, home organizations, in short, it bases itself on the organization of all the different kinds of associations formed by people.

The smallest unit of organization is the commune. The commune means that all aspects of life in a specific place are being lived as a commune. On the other hand it constitutes the smallest unit of direct democracy, where people directly govern themselves. The commune is the smallest form of assembly. Therefore, in the KCK Charter and in the existing theory of Democratic Confederalism, the commune corresponds more to street and village assemblies. Let's say many villages come together, then above them a small town assembly can for example be formed. The whole society must come together, all their issues are common problems and it is necessary to find common solutions to them. That is why, for example, organizational structures on the district level can be established above the villages and towns, provincial organizational structures on the next level and regional structures over the provincial level. And on the next higher level, for example, there can be the people's assembly of a country. This can also be established on an inter-country level. Therefore, there can be assemblies on a regional level. Then again on a people-wide level, which would be the people's congress, i.e. the highest decision-making body on behalf of a people. If different peoples come together, this would be a congress of peoples. In the most general sense, let's say on a global level, this would be the congress of all the peoples of the world.

In short, we are talking about a system of assemblies. Not just one single parliament. In Turkey, for example, there is only one parliament. Everything is based on appointments. The system we are talking about is completely different from that. For example, in Turkey or North Kurdistan there is one parliament, not two, three or five parliaments. In Germany, there is a federalist system which includes more than one parliament. In the USA there is yet another system. But the system we are talking about is not like any of these examples. It is a system in which thousands, maybe tens of thousands of communes and assemblies are involved, all of them discussing all their problems in their own living space and trying to find solutions. But at the same time all of them

are interconnected. Therefore, to put it another way, Democratic Confederalism is also a system of assemblies. It is a system of direct democracy. It is a system where no one governs anyone else. It is a system where everyone governs themselves and each other. It is not a system where someone is in charge and someone is ruled, where someone is the ruler and someone the one being ruled. It is a system in which everyone, in accordance with the definition of a political and moral human, ponders the problems of society, searches for solutions, speaks out, discusses, makes decisions and assigns someone to put these decisions into practice. It is a system where the authority and power rests entirely with the people. It is a system of direct democracy. This system can also be defined as radical democracy because it is non-state.

We can also define it as communal democracy because it is based on a communal mentality and life. The understanding of democracy here does not mean only raising and lowering hands or having a say in the decision-making process. It means that the spirit and way of life are also different. Life in this system is based on free and equal relations. If we want to express this in one single sentence: It is a system in which there is a unity of differences based on equality. There is unity. Because society must be united. The unity of who? The unity of what? The unity of differences! Here, all differences preserve their different identities. No one is more important or less important than the other, as in nation-state structures. One is not an object and the other a subject. One is not the ruler and the other the ruled. In this system, everyone exists based on their own differences and uniqueness. On the other hand, the way that relationships are formed is also equal. There is no superiority of one person over another. Therefore, this system can also be defined as unity of differences based on equality.

So why Democratic Confederalism?

Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] developed Democratic Confederalism in this way. He is a people's leader. A person who has waged and is still waging a struggle to solve the Kurdish people's problems of existence and freedom. We are people who believe in this project, who believe that the Kurds' problems of existence and freedom can be solved in this way. And we are waging a struggle accordingly. We know that throughout history there have been many people like us who have struggled for equality, freedom, democracy and existence. This struggle has always existed and is still being waged in every aspect. According to our reading of history, if we include the hierarchical stage, i.e. the historical period after the neolithic, we can look back at a process of about 7000 years since the emergence of the state. The first 1000 to 2000 years of this period were the incubation period and constitute the root cause of the social problems that people are dealing with today. It was a period in which the state had not yet been formed, but in which the male-dominated mentality and ideology were gradually being developed, in which power and individualism began to develop. It was also the period that would later give birth to the formation of state and class, but slavery in the known sense did not exist yet. The state emerged some time after the formation of this mentality, about 5,500 years ago.

Historically speaking, the state emerged in Uruk, in today's Iraq. What we want to say by referring to this historical period is that this system is the source of all the social

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problems that people are dealing with today and which they cannot adequately solve because of their current mentality. For example, power, nationalism, oppressor and oppressed, class contradictions, etc. Today's problems are gigantic and the existing mindset cannot solve them. We look at history from the day these social problems emerged until today. We say that the different problems have existed since then and that they were created by the rulers. The spirit of the rulers is not communal. They want to dominate. They want to make everything their own. They are detached from the communal essence of society and from being human. They are individualists and always want to rule and dominate. Human nature rejects this because it is libertarian and egalitarian. From the time when those who ceased to be human tried to put such tendencies into practice until today, there has always been a struggle for equality and freedom. The history of hegemony is also the history of the struggle for freedom against it. Under the conditions of natural society, people had lived freely, but after they had their freedom taken away from them, they struggled and resisted against those who made them live this way.

Since then, the struggle for equality, freedom and democracy has been continuing. Today, we are a continuation of this struggle. In this respect, we are neither the first nor will we be the last. As long as there are tendencies based on hegemony, power, sexism or the subject-object mentality that fragment society, there will be a struggle for freedom against them. We read history based on this understanding. We say that there have been a great number of struggles for equality and freedom from that day until today, but the world is still unequal, there are still problems of justice and democracy. There are still problems of existence and freedom. The Kurds, women, youth and all the oppressed people are the ones who experience this most deeply. In fact, we live in a world where whole peoples have disappeared. Many peoples were forced to migrate. So there is such a reality, but on the other hand there has also been a struggle. No one can say that the reason why the oppressed have not succeeded until today is because they have paid too small a price. Millions of people have died in the course of a single war. Kurds have been subjected to genocide for a hundred years. If we add up these hundred years of genocide, tens of millions of Kurdish people have been exterminated. Armenians have been annihilated. But there has always been a struggle to exist. Therefore, the issue is not whether you struggle too little. The crucial question is what kind of mentality you base your struggle on. When we look at it from this point of view, we can see that today the rulers have reached a high level of organization in the form of the state. They have established a monopoly and hegemony over all areas of life ideologically, politically and militarily. As a consequence, they do not allow different mindsets and ideas to emerge. Even when you fight against the system, it is as if you were fighting based on the system's own arguments. You look at things from its point of view, with its mentality. You want to achieve your goals with the system's tools, but this is not possible.

The oppressed everywhere in the world and during all of history have always wanted equality, justice, freedom and a humane life. None of the hegemons want this, because they are the ones who create such problems. These two sides think differently. Because they think differently, their dreams, social projects and utopias are different from each other. And they produce the respective means accordingly. The individualistic, selfish, self-subjugating spirit and way of thought of the rulers has given birth to the state. The

state is the most organized institution of all hegemonic classes, of all classes that want to monopolize and dominate. There may have been exceptions throughout history, but in general, almost everyone who has struggled for equality, freedom, democracy, a humane life and justice has also had the state as their goal; the state which belongs to the rulers. We have seen this clearly in the tradition of ethnic groups or the prophets, but also in the national liberation struggle of the 20th century. This was also clearly the case in all three versions of Marxism, which is a class-based departure that tries to build a world for the oppressed. The oppressed normally want justice, equality, democracy, but this tool is not at all suitable for them, for their spirit, thoughts and aspirations. It is a tool that belongs to someone else. A tool that has emerged from someone else's individualism, selfishness and domination: the state. The state is something that normally belongs to the hegemon, it shouldn't belong to you. Because you cannot think differently, because there is ideological hegemony, because mentalities have been taken over, because the possibility of thinking differently has been taken away from you, you think like the hegemon, even though you actually have a different spirit.

The tool that you have taken as a basis for solving your problems is not a tool that belongs to you, but a tool that belongs to someone else. You only think that it belongs to you. With regards to this issue, our Leadership [Abdullah Öcalan] has said: "Freedom requires its means to be as clean as its goals". The state is dirty, oppressive, rapist, cruel and monopolist. State and power are among the creators of all social problems. Therefore, no state can bring about equality. There are so many states on earth that call themselves democratic and libertarian. Which state has really solved the problems of justice, freedom, equality and democracy within its borders? None of them have. This is simply impossible, because its chemistry is degraded. The state is existentially, inevitably evil. It cannot be good in the hands of anyone. History has sufficiently shown us that the state is not good even in the hands of the best. Real socialism and the different national liberation movements are examples of this.

When we look at history in this way, we see that the oppressed, all parts of society, those who struggle for equality and freedom, all groups who want to live equally and freely, have struggled throughout history. Yet, they have not been able to find a tool or a form of social organization that suits their demands, dreams and utopias. Our claim is that Democratic Confederalism is precisely such a model that suits the demands of all social groups, all oppressed people. It is non-state, because it is the product of the oppressed, it conforms to their demands. The struggles waged by all the oppressed throughout history must finally reach their goal. All revolutions are made by the peoples, but they have always been put down because the peoples were not able to channel them outside the state. The perception that there cannot be an organization outside the state is so dominant that the peoples have been seeking a state. Therefore, without falling for such a deviation, you need to free yourself completely from the mental codes of the rulers and obtain a tool that suits your egalitarian, libertarian spirit and aspirations. That tool is Democratic Confederalism. It is a system outside of the state in which society organizes itself and thus becomes self-sufficient.

This framework put forward by Leader Apo means that the huge price that has been paid throughout history within the scope of the struggle for democratic communal values, equality and freedom will finally bear results. To the extent that this is realized,

the goals of the historic struggle for democratic communal values, equality and freedom will be put into practice and systematized. This is a historical reckoning. Against the 7000-year-old hierarchical statist system – the system of the rulers – this means the establishment of a system on behalf of the peoples. It has such a historical meaning.

We are Kurds. As a people, we are still faced with problems of existence and freedom. We are a people that certain forces try to annihilate. Kurds have been struggling against this for at least a century. This struggle can be traced back all the way to the 19th century. The Kurds have given tens of thousands of martyrs in this struggle for existence and freedom. If they do not solve the problems of existence and freedom, they may even fall victim to a genocide. Whether or not this will happen depends entirely on how much the Kurds organize themselves. The hegemonic forces of colonialism and of capitalist modernity have already decided to carry out a genocide against the Kurds. In fact, when we look at the current situation, all the practical deeds of these forces are based on this.

As the vanguard of a people that is faced with the problem of existence and freedom, the PKK is also waging a struggle. It has given tens of thousands of martyrs in this struggle. The society that the PKK has created has very strong values that come from its very social essence. The PKK does not want its struggle to be in vain, just like it does not want the struggles of all the social groups that struggled before the PKK to be in vain. Today, the PKK focuses on how to solve the Kurdish problem outside the state in order for its 50-year struggle to bear results. In this context, the formula the PKK has found is Democratic Confederalism: A system based on Democratic Autonomy in which the Kurds in the four parts of Kurdistan can continue their existence in a democratic-autonomous way, have freedom of expression and organization, and be themselves. Where has the state taken you? We can see this not only in the case of the Kurds. We also see this in the case of real socialism or Vietnam. We see it in everyone who fought for national liberation. We see it in everyone who has turned towards power. Regardless of whether we have the potential to establish a state or not, regardless of whether there is such a possibility or not, we act with the belief that the solution to the Kurdish problem lies outside the state, not in the state.

So what do we replace the state with? As we have mentioned, our approach is based on the democratic-confederal system which has Democratic Autonomy at its foundation. This means to not dissolve into the system, so that there won't be any rulers, aghas and oppressors among the Kurds. Kurds have fought for equality and freedom, they have demanded justice. They struggle for their existence to be recognized and for them to have the opportunity to live as Xwebûn ['to be oneself']. So the result of the struggle must be in accordance with this. Otherwise, there is the example of South Kurdistan [North Iraq]. There, too, Kurds are faced with problems of existence. So much struggle was waged there, but now the results are obvious: It is well-known that a dynastic system has been established there; that someone/a family has taken over all the riches of Kurdistan based on so-called elections which are completely based on fraud; and that they have tried to turn all Kurds into collaborators of capitalist modernity, colonialism and genocide. We seek to prevent such a situation, such cancerous cells from arising among the Kurds, so that the Kurdish struggle results in equality and freedom in line with its real purpose. Let relations be equal and free. Let us move

towards classlessness. Let there be no formation of classes. Let there be justice. Let all people be active. Let all people govern each other. Let all people be responsible for each other. In order to achieve this, for us Kurds, Democratic Confederalism, i.e. Democratic Autonomy and the democratic-confederal organizational and social system, is the solution option for us.

Especially in the course of the ‘Arab Spring’ a great upheaval took place. In the wake of these developments, have you been able to introduce Democratic Confederalism as an alternative well enough?

There have been moments in history that can easily be called times of chaos, e.g. in the case of the ‘Arab Spring’. In the Middle East, the stance of society against the current hegemonic system and despotism is very strong, because the region is the center of slavery and class and state formation. Whenever there is an opportunity, this stance becomes visible. Iran is an example of this, just like today’s struggle of the Kurds. In the ‘Arab Spring’ we could see that although Arabs are supposedly hegemonic, the Arab people stood up everywhere. In such uprisings, the people demand equality and freedom. But what will they replace the state with? Democratic Confederalism is what needs to be put in its place in order to avoid being integrated into the system. We have developed this solution, but we have not spread it sufficiently in the region and have not been able to find the opportunity to organize accordingly all over the Middle East. There have been inadequacies on our side. Since we are a movement that is faced with the issue of existence and is being attacked within the scope of a very intense liquidation concept, we have not yet been able to turn Democratic Confederalism into a project that appeals to all the peoples of the Middle East. In a way, we are late. In the course of the Arab Spring uprisings took place all over the Arab world. Regimes were overthrown only to be replaced by a different version of the same regime. The result was not what the peoples had wanted and desired. In other words, freedom, justice, equality and democracy were not achieved.

Doesn’t the practical implementation in Rojava constitute an important success?

In Rojava, Leader Apo had been working hard for years. He still has the power to influence society there. The people of Rojava have sent thousands of young people to the ranks of freedom. Rojava is the area where Leader Apo’s ideas have had the greatest effect. When there was a period of chaos in Rojava, the people immediately carried out their own people’s revolution. Rojava is currently subjected to genocidal attacks, several forces are trying to distort the revolution, there is intense pressure, and there are many inadequacies due to the mentality, organization and internal problems. Consequently, very little of Democratic Confederalism has so far been put into practice there. Despite this, the Rojava Revolution is at a point today that attracts and fascinates all humanity. Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Circassians, Armenians, Assyrians and Syriacs are all autonomously organized within the existing system. A Kurd is not superior to an Arab. An Arab is not superior to a Circassian. They organize as autonomously as they want on the basis of their own communes and assemblies. On the other hand, all of them know that their liberation is not limited to themselves. They know that they need

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each other against their common enemy. Therefore, they have joined forces. They are both autonomous and united. Rojava is moving towards a system in which all groups of society organize themselves. It is doing this under the conditions of World War 3. It is doing this while the genocidal Turkish state is trying to destroy the revolution with the complete support of international powers. And the Turkish state also gets huge support and encouragement from the Kurdish collaborators and traitors. Despite such an abundance of enemies, Democratic Confederalism has found the opportunity to be put into practice in Rojava, albeit in a limited way. Democratic Confederalism is the reason why people from different parts of the world continue to come to Rojava and take part in the struggle. They experience there what social, egalitarian and libertarian Democratic Confederalism is like. All the people who come to Rojava not only gain experience from there but also try to protect the revolution against the attacks of the ruling, statist forces.

So is it a prerequisite for Democratic Confederalism that states do not exist?

Today, it is a historical necessity that – in accordance with their purpose – the struggles for freedom and equality result in a non-state social system. This is necessary so that the results of the PKK's struggle for existence and freedom are in accordance with its purpose; so that all relations within Kurdish society become equal, free and democratic, and not distorted. Serious attempts are being made to become non-state. Under the conditions of World War 3, Democratic Confederalism was declared by Leader Apo in 2005 so that the peoples would be able to pursue real projects and their struggles would not be in vain. Democratic Confederalism is not something that will emerge only after the complete disappearance of all states. This is not its aim. It does not aim to destroy states and replace them with yet another political power. Democratic Confederalism entails the awareness that we are in an age of states. Consequently, it is a formulation of how to live together with states within their borders, based on dignity and self-preservation. Democratic Confederalism stands in constant tension and contradiction with the states that have always and everywhere existed, because their chemistry is different. As mentioned before, we are not talking about something that will happen in some distant future. We are talking about something that is happening and must happen already now.

What kind of changes can Democratic Confederalism bring about in life?

The PKK has tens of thousands of cadres. Thus, the PKK is also an example of a society. It has its own way of life. The current lifestyle of the PKK is completely organized in accordance with Democratic Confederalism. We are already living this. We are not talking about something we ourselves don't live. We don't make propaganda saying that something can happen that we ourselves haven't realized already, that we can't show is possible. Therefore, we are talking about something we are living already. To put it more concretely: So what changes, what can change? Since the answer to these questions is based on a paradigm, it is better to look at the paradigm itself. This is based on a paradigm whose foundation is democracy, ecology and women's freedom.

This is a specific perspective. This is how we define life. We derive our definition of life from the nature of society and humans. And we are consequently looking for a system that suits this nature. When we look at the pillars of the paradigm, it becomes clearer what Democratic Confederalism stands for in life. Most importantly, this is a democratic paradigm.

How do you live democracy within the PKK? Or what does democracy look like in a place where the democratic-confederal system has been organized?

Democracy is one of the terms that has been most distorted by the states; one of the words that states have literally taken control of. Democracy has nothing to do with the state, because the system in which the people govern themselves is called democracy. Who can govern themselves in a state system? Is there any example of 'self-administration' other than going to the polls every 4 or 5 years?

So there isn't any democracy in the state?

No, there isn't. Even in the most progressive states, democracy is very, very limited. But within the PKK we have direct democracy. We make all the decisions about our own lives ourselves. We lead all discussions ourselves. We ourselves guarantee our right to speak. No one has the right to have a say over us or about us. We have a say about ourselves, about our own lives and problems. We take all decision ourselves. Our smallest unit is the team. And each team takes its own decisions. If there are problems in life, the team decides how to solve them. It does not implement someone else's decision. It also determines how the decisions it has taken will be put into practice. The team chooses a coordinator for itself. In Democratic Confederalism, all coordinations are elected. The elected coordinator is not a superior or something like that. Her or his duty is to put all decisions that have been taken into practice. Otherwise, there is no possibility for a coordination to put itself in the place of a team, assembly or commune and take decisions on its behalf. The moment it becomes clear that a coordination is so overbearing and superior that it takes decisions according to its own mind and whim, it will be dismissed from office.

Could you compare the state system with the system that you defend and live?

In the democracy we predicate ourselves on and live in, every human being is valuable and unique. In state systems, no human being considers themselves as valuable, because everything happens despite the human being. People are completely reduced to their basic instincts. They are treated like a herd. All that is required of people is this: There is money that needs to be obtained for the necessities of life; and people are running after that money, dedicating their whole lives to it, and almost cracking and becoming depressed due to the stress connected to this. A very, very large part of the problems that people experience within the hegemonic, statist system, especially under the conditions of capitalist modernity, stem from the feeling of worthlessness. This stems from the fact that they are made to feel that they are unnecessary. They

are not treated as human beings. In Democratic Confederalism, the greatest value for us is the human being. In our system, people compete to improve each other. Not to eradicate each other, not to do something against each other. Everything is for the human being. We do not mean a human-centered understanding of the universe, but the human being really is unique. All religions, sciences and philosophies say that human beings have unique qualities, many talents and huge potential. The hegemony don't say this because it doesn't suit them. But since we are not hegemony and since we want to live in accordance with our own essence and nature, we want the same for everyone. In the system of Democratic Confederalism, human beings are very valuable, unique, political, have a voice and are part of a discussion. Their brains, tongues and hearts are wide-open. They consider themselves responsible for the problems of themselves and their comrades, as well as for the problems of all humanity of which they are members. In this system, the mind is in a constant mode of production. In such a system, people are as active as possible. You literally get rid of the dead soil that you had been covered in. The human is thus formed based on her/his own reality, essence and potential.

Does this organizational system and approach also have something to do with the PKK's ability to survive and continue to grow in the face of the continuing heavy attacks against it?

Yes, it definitely does. How can the PKK maintain its existence under the conditions of the hierarchical state system, capitalist modernity and in an environment where the genocidal Turkish Republic has the support of the whole world to attack us? We know very well how valuable our lives are, how valuable each of us is, how powerful human beings are. Therefore, we constantly bring out that power in ourselves. We resist against all the attacks with this power we unleash. The very fact that the PKK continues to exist and to trigger off developments shows very clearly how much people can change and transform in this type of organizational system. Both within our movement and within the democratic-confederal system – to the extent that it finds the opportunity to be put into practice – human communities undergo a development in accordance with their own strong essence, thus revealing their true potential. They feel that they are valuable. They become communal. Their emotions become much stronger. They become one and form a whole. The system of Democratic Confederalism is an environment in which human development is lived in the most powerful way.

You said 'it is mainly based on the paradigm of a society founded on democracy, ecology and women's freedom'. Why the emphasis on women's freedom?

The first slave in history was the woman. The hegemon man did this. Consequently, the oldest libertarian and the one who has resisted the longest for the sake of freedom is the woman. Even our enemies have said that 'the PKK is a women's party'. And this is true. The PKK really is a women's party. It is not only a party with a large number of women in its ranks, it is a party that bases many of its fundamental strategic and ideological characteristics on women. In this respect it really is a women's party. It sees the solution to problems in the emotional intelligence of women. The women and

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men in the PKK argue that it is necessary to think outside the existing male mindset, that this mental structure, shaped by the male-dominant ideology of the ruling/statist system, must be changed. The male mindset is the reason why there are so many problems. Therefore, it is necessary to go beyond this mindset. The intelligence you will acquire when you step out of this mindset is the emotional intelligence of women. All men and women in the PKK have a duty to adapt their mentality and way of thinking to the emotional intelligence of women. To the extent that they do this, they become more humble, democratic, faithful, sensitive, responsible and stronger. This is why the PKK is a women's party. The kind of social form that the PKK bases itself on and that it wants to create is the natural society. If it is not interfered with from the outside by different distorted mentalities, natural society is a society centered around the mother-woman. It is a society that develops under the leadership of women. Therefore, the PKK's goal is the realization of a society led by woman. The PKK itself is also led by women. The most valuable thing for us is the strong stance of women that have discovered their own essence and nature. The empowerment of women means the empowerment of men, because it changes and transforms them. The woman throws away the existing statist, sovereign aspects of men and wages a struggle against him. Empowered women make life beautiful. The leadership of such women is something that all men in the PKK predicate themselves on, believe in and have faith in. From this perspective, the social system, the form of society that the PKK is based on is the natural society led by women. The PKK predicates itself on the nature of society.

Taking into account the practice in Rojava, what does the relation between men and women in the democratic-confederal system look like?

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In the Rojava Revolution, if you look at what the relations between men and women are like in the face of all the attacks, you can see how active women have become, and how much men have given up their hegemonic features. They have become prone to change and transformation. We can see how a meaningful life, equal and libertarian relations unleash the potential of women and how life thus becomes more beautiful. In the democratic-confederal system, relations between men and women will be equal and free. No one will be superior to anyone. No one will dominate anyone. Everyone will live as equal and free beings according to their uniqueness, on the basis of their essence. Since there are no obstacles in front of anyone, you can live out the potential in your essence as much as you want. There are unlimited possibilities. The same is true for men. A meaningful, equal and free life is precisely the life envisioned in the system of Democratic Confederalism. In its purest form, this kind of life is already being tried to be lived within the PKK today.

Your paradigm also has an ecological dimension. Why is this important as a complementary dimension?

Currently, we are faced with serious droughts. Everyone talks about them, but they know that droughts are not a natural reflex. It is something created by capitalist modernity. In this context, people talk about the greenhouse gas effect or the burning of fossil fuels. There are so many environmental disasters and ecological problems.

All of them are caused by the hegemonic and insatiable human being. The main cause for all ecological disasters and environmental problems are the rulers. The forces of capitalist modernity. There is a war against nature. Nature is literally groaning. Today, this has reached a point where the question is how long nature will be able to continue to exist. There are problems like thirst, droughts, etc. Because they are hegemonic men, these ruling state factions, who are the pioneers of the hierarchical state system, are hostile to all groups of society on the one hand, and especially to women on the other hand. They are hostile to nature because they see it as a blessing given to them and do not look at it as a living being. They approach nature as if it was a machine, an object and a resource.

Throughout history, all rulers have been hostile to society, women and nature. To all the oppressed. There is first nature and second nature, in which human beings and society form one. Women, nature and society are all oppressed. But there is no such approach to nature in the system of Democratic Confederalism. It approaches nature like a mother. We all come from nature. We define nature as the first nature. We see ourselves as a part of nature, as its offspring. Just as an offspring should not commit crimes against its mother, we, as second nature, should not commit crimes against the first nature, which is our mother. It is important for us to know that we live surrounded by living things. By tampering with the system of that living being, we also eliminate our own conditions of existence. We see nature as being alive. This is the approach to nature within the PKK. At least we strive for this approach to prevail. We conduct our internal struggle on this basis. We are a community that does not harm nature. We are a community that tries to live according to what nature provides. When we spread this attitude on a wider level within the peoples, within the whole society, humanity will no longer commit crimes against nature.

Could you elaborate a little more on the issue of the ‘third nature’?

The third nature is the coming together of human beings and nature in the right way. It means that human beings participate in nature as they should be. Throughout the history of the hierarchical state system, so many crimes have been committed against nature and its balance has been tampered with. As you push back the ruling statist mentality, as you break its hegemony over life, as you open up space for democracy, freedom, equality and open minds, and as you develop the appropriate social organization, you also improve communication with nature. You create a generation that is more sensitive to nature, a human species/social reality that has a more sensitive, responsible and democratic stance towards nature.

The deviation that has emerged with imperialism and male-dominant thinking, has turned itself into the state. It has given birth to the formation of classes and has survived until today. Human beings, society, women and nature cannot live with this. The struggles all over the world show clearly that they can't live like that anymore. The hierarchical statist system, the power system is a deviation. It cannot be lived with. The current version of it, i.e. capitalist modernity, cannot be lived with at all. Its only goal is profit and selfishness. Its soul is full of selfishness.

“The women and men in the PKK argue that it is necessary to think outside the existing male mindset, that this mental structure, shaped by the male-dominant ideology of the ruling/statist system, must be changed.”

As an alternative to this, Democratic Confederalism constitutes a system of communal life that is in accordance with the nature of human beings and society. It is a system in accordance with the mentality that predicates itself on the communal nature of human beings and society who strive for a life in harmony with nature. As a movement, we want and struggle for the realization of Democratic Confederalism as a system in Kurdistan, the Middle East and the whole world. The ruling, hegemonic powers all over the world today have established themselves as a system through the organization of states. Similarly, Democratic Confederalism is a system in which all oppressed people all over the world, all social groups subjected to the oppression and attacks of this system can come together, unite their struggles and organize themselves. On the one hand there is Democratic Confederalism, and on the other hand there is the state. The system of the ruling, statist powers is the state. Basically, it is the nation-state today. The system of all groups of society is Democratic Confederalism. It may be called the KCK in Kurdistan and something else in a different place, but its essence does not change. The essence is to establish a non-state system that is in accordance with the nature of human beings and society.

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