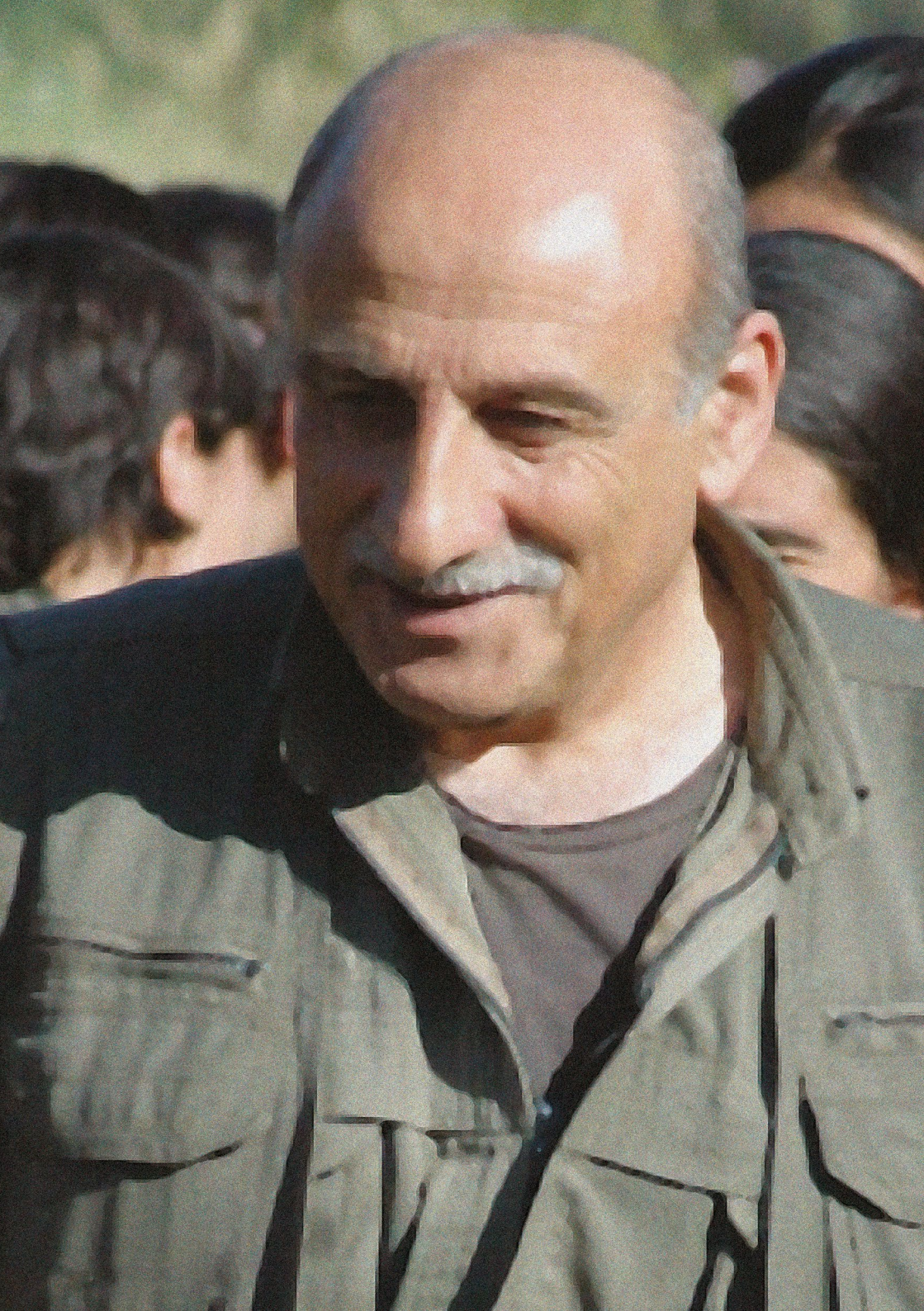


GLOBAL POWERS AND THE UNRESOLVED KURDISH QUESTION TODAY

An interview with Duran Kalkan,
member of the KCK Executive Council



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In an extensive interview Duran Kalkan, member of the KCK Executive Council, talks about the strategy of NATO with respect to Turkey's occupation of Kurdistan, Germany's role in Turkey's expansionist policy, the historical development of Turkey as a nation state and the role of international powers in it, Turkey's 'neo-Ottoman' agenda, the reasons for the international criminalization of the PKK, the role of the PKK in the KCK system, the kind of relations the KCK seeks with states and democratic forces around the world and the likelihood of a new peace process in Turkey.

We have been organizing ourselves under the umbrella of the Kurd-istan 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 every day to put our vision of a self-governed, just and sustainable society into practice.

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INTERVIEW

What is the agenda or strategy of NATO, and the United States in particular, with respect to the Turkish invasion of South Kurdistan, and in relation to the KCK (Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union)?

The Turkish state's invasive attacks on Rojava and South Kurdistan cannot be taken separately from its colonialist and genocidal sovereignty over North Kurdistan (East Turkey). Consequently, the genocidal attacks in question have the objective of destroying the existence of Kurds, as in the North, and carry out a Kurdish genocide. This is definitely their primary and fundamental aim. The Turkish state and its current AKP-MHP fascist government has seen clearly that unless a genocide is carried out in the other parts of Kurdistan, first and foremost in South Kurdistan and in Rojava, to eradicate Kurdish achievements there, it will not be possible to achieve a successful outcome from the genocidal attacks being carried out in the North. For democratic developments in one part of Kurdistan affects awareness, organization and practical actions for the struggle for freedom and democracy in other parts.

In that case, if Turkey wishes to complete its Kurdish genocide, it has to direct its attacks against the existence and freedom of Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan and abroad. This is the conclusion that the Turkish state and its governments have reached after more than 40 years of attacks on the PKK aiming to destroy it or force it to surrender.

The Turkish invasions of Rojava and South Kurdistan have two main goals. Of course, a closer look reveals many more goals, such as the use of the Turkish occupation attacks as a tool in the context of regional and even global conflicts of interest. But we can consider the following two basic goals as crucial.

Firstly: to perpetrate a Kurdish genocide. In short, the most important goal of the occupation attacks is to eradicate the free Kurdish consciousness, will, organisation and gains and to destroy the existence of the Kurds. This does not mean just a military force, a political, economic, organisational structure, but the intention is to not leave anything left that is Kurdish, even at the level of spirit, feeling or idea. They want to destroy everything that constitutes the Kurds.

Turkey is already doing all it can to carry out a cultural genocide and physical massacres in North Kurdistan. It is changing the demography of the region, forcibly displacing Kurds from their homeland and applying a policy of

assimilation. Everything that constitutes the Kurds is being subjected to cultural genocide: Kurdish history, language and culture is being Turkicised, and the Kurdish existence has become a raw material for Turkish nation-building, the intention being to leave nothing left in this world that is Kurdish.

The same aim is behind the invasion of Rojava and South Kurdistan. It is vital to know and understand this. Because we are dealing with facts here. Its purpose is to destroy Kurdish gains, remove the status gained in those two parts and carry out a Kurdish genocide. Hence, what has taken place in Efrîn, Girê Spî and Serêkaniye, which are no different to what has been done in North Kurdistan.

It is clear that the Turkish state and the fascist AKP-MHP government are committing genocide in the occupied areas. It is also apparent that the attacks in the South Kurdish areas Heftanin, Metina, Zap and Bradost have the same purpose. Consequently, it is necessary to view the attacks on Rojava and South Kurdistan as part of the genocide being perpetrated against Kurds. The attacks on the PKK are being carried out with the same aim, as the PKK is the fundamental force that represents and develops the existence of Kurds. In order to eradicate the Kurds, that is, in order to commit genocide against the Kurds, it is first necessary to destroy the PKK, which is why the PKK is the primary target.

The second objective behind the invasion is to occupy Rojava and South Kurdistan, i.e. to put the whole of Kurdistan within the borders of the Turkish Republic, just like during the former Ottoman Empire. This is part of the Turkish state's 'Neo-Ottoman' policy of expansionism in the Middle East. Whereas in the past this was something whispered behind closed doors, it is now being openly expressed by some circles. This Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki), or Enverist policy, and the policy of the Kemalists, shows that, apart from some nuances, in essence there is no difference between them.

The way Tayyip Erdoğan and Devlet Bahçeli are handling this expresses a combination of the Enverist and Kemalist way of doing things. The goal of annexing once again the former territory of the Ottoman Empire, especially Rojava and South Kurdistan, is a defining element of the mentality and politics of the Turkish state. While the Committee of Union and Progress and Enver Pasha did this openly, the Kemalists tried to do it in a more covert way. For instance, the taking of Hatay. We are aware that Mustafa Kemal bequeathed the 'National Pact' (Turkish: Misak-ı Milli) ambition to use every opportunity

to retake these lands for the Turkish state. Consequently, Turkey aims to annex territory and pursue expansionism to further its objective of becoming a regional imperialist force.

However, since the implementation of this requires suitable conditions, it is not always openly mentioned or undertaken. When conditions permit and there are opportunities, efforts are made to take steps in this direction. Generally speaking they are cautious and prudent and do not state their aims brazenly.

Now that NATO and the US are supporting the Turkish state and AKP-MHP fascism's invasion of Rojava and South Kurdistan, it is necessary to evaluate this strategy in light of the aims of Turkey mentioned above. For Turkey takes as a basis and protects the borders that came into existence after WWI and were consolidated after WWII, and of which NATO and the US approve. We are aware that these political boundaries divided Kurdistan into four parts and accepted the establishment of a genocidal domination of Kurdistan by various states while ignoring the Kurds. Consequently, the Turkish state's colonialist-genocidal sovereignty over Kurdistan is not opposed by the US and NATO, but, on the contrary, is approved and supported.

In fact, the US and NATO are very happy that it is the Turkish state that divides Kurdistan and subjects it to a colonialist genocidal hegemony. That is why they provide support to uphold the current conditions. They have agreed to the Turkish state establishing itself as a colonialist-genocidal power in Kurdistan. Their approval was demonstrated by making Turkey a member of NATO following WWII. Thus, they assumed responsibility for the security of the country. Therefore, today they support the genocidal mentality and policies of the Turkish state. Turkey has taken advantage of this by mounting attacks on both South Kurdistan and Rojava in addition to its ongoing campaign in North Kurdistan. It is continuing its efforts to occupy and annex Rojava and South Kurdistan, demonstrating a unity of mentality and politics between the US, NATO and Turkey.

So, are there no differences? Undoubtedly there are. For one thing, there are disagreements from time to time regarding the practical implementation of the policies described earlier. Then there are the contradictions and conflicts over economic and political interests. The US and various NATO members benefit from the results of the Turkish state's colonialist-genocidal policy towards the Kurds; that is, the difficulties that Turkey encounters because of it. The

more Turkey seeks an open confrontation with the Kurds, the more it becomes dependent on the aforementioned states. This allows them to get even greater access to Turkey's resources and thus increase their profits. Hence, they encourage Turkey as this suits their interests. Of course, we are aware that this is a conflict of interests between capitalist states.

However, there is a difference in perspective in that the mentality and policy of the Turkish state is to eradicate everything that belongs to the Kurds, whereas this is not the case for the US and NATO. For there is no benefit to them. Let us suppose that Kurdishness was completely wiped out and assimilated, with the Kurds being Turkicised, Persianised and Arabised. In this case, there would be no Kurdish issue as no Kurds would remain.

In such a situation, what would happen? No conflict would remain between the Kurds and Turkey-Syria-Iran-Iraq. Therefore, the possibility of the US and the other NATO states benefiting economically and politically from the conflict would disappear. The existence of a Kurdish question enables the US, NATO member states, Russia and other global powers to obtain economic and political benefits. It also weakens Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria and makes them more reliant on external support. Consequently, the US and NATO are in favour of such conflict and do not want a resolution of the Kurdish issue, as they would lose out economically and politically. Hence, these forces do not want the Kurds to completely disappear.

So, what do they want? They neither want the Kurds to be completely annihilated, nor do they want the Kurds to establish a unified, free and democratic system in the whole of Kurdistan, as the environment of conflict between the Kurds and regional states would vanish. This goal shapes the policy of these powers towards the regional states, but also towards the Kurds.

The US and NATO's 'KCK strategy' is based on this and continues, with its priority being support for Turkey. Consequently, all manner of Turkish state colonialist-genocidal-occupying-annexing assaults are supported.

Secondly, they do not share the Turkish goal of entirely eradicating the Kurds. What they want to see disappear is Kurdish forces that have organisation and actions promoting a free, democratic will and the corresponding ideas. In other words, they do not want the KCK, as it expresses the free Kurdish will.

So, what do they want from the KCK? They want it to become like the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party). Since they are opposed to the KCK, they fully support Turkish attacks on the PKK and KCK. While Turkey wants to entirely destroy the PKK and KCK, forces such as the US and NATO wish to see it transform into the KDP.

What does it mean to become like the KDP? It means to act in the interests of family, clan and region rather than that of Kurdish national unity. It means to implement a self-interested policy of collaboration and surrender instead of one based on the free existence of the entirety of Kurds, their unity, community and their own willpower. That is, it means to have a mentality and politics that accepts the relationship and alliance between the KDP and AKP-MHP. It is apparent that to be in an alliance with AKP-MHP fascism today is to be opposed to Kurdish unity, Kurdish freedom, Kurdish democracy and to relations and an alliance with other democratic forces.

What does it represent? To mobilise all the resources of the Kurds in the interests of its own family and dynasty, to sell the national democratic values of Kurdistan and to establish relations and an alliance with a genocidal force like AKP-MHP fascism, which is the most reactionary, dictatorial, genocidal and hostile to the Kurds, for its own interests. That is what it represents. This is what the US and NATO agenda for the KCK consists of. To endeavour to make the KCK a collaborationist entity like the KDP, with a mentality and policy that rejects Kurdish freedom, democracy, existence and unity. Their objective is to transform the KCK so that it acts in the interests of the US and NATO. It is evident that this is their strategic and tactical plan which they are trying to implement.

What is the agenda of Europe, and in particular of Germany, both as members of NATO and as an independent bloc, with respect to Turkey and the Turkish state's invasion of South Kurdistan?

First of all, let me state that it does not seem realistic for Germany to be an independent bloc. Even if such a thing were true it would be weak. It would be more accurate to say it endeavours to act in its own economic interests and tries to prioritise its economic interests and exploitation over everything else.

We are not alone in saying this. Only recently, Chancellor Merkel stated: "Our political position is based on economic interests and exploitation." Additionally, Germany is one of the states that is in most need of NATO. In this way it resembles Turkey. In the same way as the Turkish state overcomes many of its weaknesses by relying on NATO, ensuring its security through NATO, a similar thing may be said for Germany. Therefore, it is absolutely not true, although there may be contradictions on account of certain differences over economic interests, to say that Germany is keeping its distance from NATO and has set up a separate bloc. This is definitely not the case.

If we define Germany's stance in this way, it becomes easier to comprehend Germany's attitude to Turkey's occupation attacks on South Kurdistan. Just as with everything else, this explains its approach to the occupation of Rojava and South Kurdistan, based as it is on its economic interests and its policy of exploitation.

It was Germany that was the first state that made a positive response to the investment project presented to the UN with a map by Tayyip Erdoğan, which envisages the removal of all existing forces from Idlib all the way to Derik in Rojava, and the settling of refugees there. Germany said such a project could be evaluated and that it would participate in the preparation and investment. Its approach to the occupation of South Kurdistan is the same.

We are aware that Germany has taken every opportunity to develop its economic and financial relations with Iraq. We also know that Germany has a close economic relationship with Iran, despite that country's problematic relations with the US and NATO. Today, these relations are much stronger than they used to be. Germany also has similar relations with the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government; South Kurdistan) and is one of its main backers. Hence, Germany addresses Turkey's occupation of South Kurdistan on this basis.

Since the governments in Iran, Iraq and Hewlêr do not oppose the Turkish occupation of South Kurdistan, on the contrary, support it, it is evident that Germany, too, will be supportive. Its economic interests lie behind this supportive stance.

Germany has always been in favour of the Middle East being ruled by Turkey. In history, Germany constructed its economic, political and military interests on the framework of Turkish supervision, developing its relations with the Ottoman empire in this way. While on the one hand it wished to exploit the resources of the Middle East, on the other it calculated it would be able to reach India via the Middle East, which was necessary as part of its struggle with Britain. Consequently, its relations with the Ottomans are continuing on this basis with the Republic of Turkey. Germany has always supported Turkey's expansionist policies towards the Middle East, for it calculates that in this way it will be able reach and exploit more resources. Hence, Germany will not oppose the Turkish state occupying or even annexing different regions of Rojava, South Kurdistan, or even other parts of the Middle East. Perhaps it will act as if it opposes such acts when there is general opposition expressed, but it will continue to offer support covertly. This needs to be understood, as this is the historic strategic positioning on which the German state and its system of capital are based. Therefore, neither the US nor Germany is opposed to Turkey's occupation of Rojava and South Kurdistan. On the contrary, they are supportive. When they are unable to express it openly, they do it covertly. Their policies regarding Iran and South Kurdistan necessitate this, as do their economic-political relations with Turkey and their strategic proximity. As long as German capital pursues this hegemonic policy there will be no question of a change in Germany's political stance in this matter.

In what ways does this policy manifest itself? In what kind of relationship and alliance does it continue in a covert way and with what kind of organisation? Of course, in order to answer such questions research is needed to reveal the truth, for some things are carried out in a clandestine way and do not find their way into the press or public arena. Regarding these secret relations and alliances, in particular how Germany supports the Turkish state's occupation should be revealed.

There is also a need for the open support given to Turkey to be better exposed. Let us not forget that the weapons Turkey uses in its attacks from Afrin to Avaşin, Zap and Xakurke are NATO weapons, US weapons or German weapons.

German armoured vehicles are being used to carry out these occupations. German tanks are on the streets in Afrin perpetrating a Kurdish genocide. This is not something that is unseen or not known about, but the media does not cover it sufficiently. The support Germany provides to such a genocide is not sufficiently exposed and revealed. It is, first and foremost, up to the German media and German democrats to expose this, for such a thing damages German democracy and freedom most of all. It strengthens German capital, consequently weakening the German people and leaving German workers in a weaker position. It makes Germany a supporter of fascism-colonialism-genocide and undermines German democracy and freedom. This is clear. In that case, everyone must see this reality. In particular, German revolutionaries and democrats must expose these policies and wage a more effective struggle against them.

Can you tell us about the key developments in the transition from the Ottoman empire to the modern Turkish state; what were the key transformations made in this period, and what of the Ottoman state was preserved in the new Turkish Republic? What role did the Turkification project and the genocide of other peoples play in this process?

Firstly, you have the 1839 Tanzimat Fermanı (Imperial Edict of Reorganisation/Edict of Gülhane). This edict set out the first principles and programme for the transition from the Ottoman empire to the Turkish nation-state.

The second key development was the Declaration of the First Constitutional Era in 1876 (Birinci Meşrutiyet). The founding of a Chamber of Deputies (Meclis-i Mebusa) was the second step towards the founding of a nation-state.

The third key step was the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908 (İkinci Meşrutiyet). The Chamber of Deputies was reopened, the Ottoman system was completely superseded and the way was opened for the Committee of Union and Progress to take power, creating a speeding up of the process of forming the Turkish nation-state. Based on these central

developments, the foundations of the Turkish Republic were in fact established by the administration set up by the Committee of Union and Progress.

We may also say that the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) government was formed as a proto-type Turkish Republic. What remains is to correctly understand and evaluate the CUP government and its later transition to the founding of the Kemalist Turkish Republic. This transition took place during and after WWI, taking shape around the defeat of the CUP administration.

Let us not forget that Mustafa Kemal was a member of the CUP, a general, and the Kemalist clique was part of the CUP. It was definitely not separate from it. But Mustafa Kemal Pasha's political stance was not the same as that of Talat, Enver and Jemal pashas. The difference between them may be expressed thus: while Talat, Enver and Jemal followed more open imperialist policies and had expansionist aims for the Ottoman empire to embrace the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, Mustafa Kemal considered such policies adventurist, having a political approach that we can call more concrete or realistic, envisaging the protection of the existing Ottoman state. Apart from that there was no difference between them.

Following the Sivas and Erzurum Congresses, the first thing Mustafa Kemal did was open the new parliament in Ankara on 23 April 1920. This shows clearly how much his policy was based on the Tanzimat Fermanı and the 1st and 2nd Constitutional Eras.

While such a parliament was being founded in Ankara, the cadre of the CUP were gathered in Istanbul and played no part in that opening. However, a significant number of those who attended the congresses in Sivas and Erzurum were CUP members, hence it is beyond dispute that those involved in opening the Ankara Parliament were part of the CUP movement.

Moreover, while the parliament was being opened in Ankara, Istanbul was under foreign state occupation, meaning the CUP cadres there could play no role in the new government. As it became clear that the authority of the Ankara parliament would grow, these cadres made their way to Ankara, some openly and others in a clandestine manner. Consequently, we know that the CUP cadre from Istanbul played a predominant role in the formation of the Turkish Republic in Ankara. There is a continuity. It is an indisputable fact that almost all the leading figures involved in establishing the Turkish state, first and foremost

İsmet İnönü, were members of the CUP. Only Talat, Enver and Jemal were left out. In fact, they established sovereignty over the new state, hence we may say that the Turkish state was a continuation of the CUP government. The transition was from Istanbul to Ankara and the coming to power of the formerly weaker clique, the Kemalist movement. 'The Turkish Republic' replaced the Ottoman Empire. These were the fundamental changes that took place.

Apart from that, in reality the mentality and policies of the Committee of Union and Progress continued. With Talat, Enver and Jemal gone, Mustafa Kemal Pasha took over, with the difference in political understanding outlined above being realised. In particular, by rejecting the adventurist, expansionist, imperialist projects of Enver Paşa, who sought to bring the Turkic peoples of Central Asia into the Ottoman fold, a more practical and realistic line was adopted whose goal was to exploit any available opportunities. This is the essence of Kemalist policy. In fact, this policy did not result from Mustafa Kemal's opposition to the ideas of Talat, Enver and Jemal. Rather, it stemmed from the fact that these policies could not possibly be implemented. Mustafa Kemal did not think that Enver's ideas were wrong. He just did not see how they could be implemented. He did not consider the political-military conditions of the time favorable enough for this policy to succeed. He therefore considered them to be mistaken, erroneous and dangerous.

Hence, it was Mustafa Kemal who was proved right. Despite all his efforts, Enver Pasha suffered shattering defeats. First, he destroyed the Ottoman empire, then he carried himself away to calamity, whereas it is evident that Mustafa Kemal acted in a more realistic and objective way when establishing today's borders of the nation-state that is the Republic of Turkey.

While the Kemalist administration of this new state rejected Enver's adventurist policies, it adopted in full the mentality and politics of the CUP. It based its policies on war, nationalism, hostility to other peoples and cultures, genocidal tendencies, refusal to grant rights to any ethnic community apart from the Turks and engagement in expansionism whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Let us not forget that the Turkish state took possession of the Armenian Genocide. Following that, it carried out the Assyrian and Syriac genocide in 1924. It carried out a genocide of Asia Minor's Greeks. It is the Turkish state that started the genocide of Kurds during WWI and, making it the basis of all its policies, has continued it until the present. It has adopted all the racist,

chauvinist, Turkish nationalist, Pan-Turkist and Turanian ideas of the CUP and implemented a Turkification policy towards all the communities of Anatolia and Mesopotamia, putting them through cultural and linguistic genocide, slaughtering them and subjecting them to assimilation.

It has used massacres, displacement and demographic change in a most effective way to further assimilation. The Turkish state has completely adopted the CUP's genocidal mentality and policy. It has even developed it further. The policies pursued today by AKP-MHP fascism, the hostility to Kurds and the continuing genocide, and the hostility to Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians, demonstrate this clearly. This can also be seen in the official state discourse, its ideology and propaganda and education and commerce.

Furthermore, whenever the opportunity presents itself, particularly in the other parts of Kurdistan, it has a policy of gradual expansionism into former Ottoman territories. The taking of Hatay, the invasion of Cyprus, occupation attacks on Rojava and South Kurdistan, even intervention in Libya and in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia and its relations with Qatar and similar powers illustrate this policy clearly.

Mustafa Kemal found Enver's expansionist policies adventurous, but when conditions were right, he implemented them, step by step. Although he gave the impression of respecting borders and made declarations of peace, he followed the secret agenda, creating opportunities to invade other territories. Mustafa Kemal's 'Peace in the country, peace in the world' was in fact nothing more than a saying made up to conceal the expansionist annexationist policy and the clandestine genocidal war being waged against the Kurds and other peoples. Today AKP-MHP fascism is implementing this policy very efficiently.

In fact, Tayyip Erdoğan has stated that he does not consider it correct for the Kemalist movement to have followed such a policy in a clandestine way, declaring it should be done overtly. His opposition to the Treaty of Lausanne, his ambitions to invade other parts of Kurdistan and the Middle East and his mention of 'Neo- Ottomanism' clearly demonstrates this truth.

If we look closely, we will see that the period from the Tanzimat to the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship is a continuum, with various stages. Tanzimat is the first stage, then the 1st Constitutional Era is another, as is the 2nd Constitutional Era and the CUP. Another stage is the founding of the Kemalist Turkish Republic.

The most recent stage was the fascist-military coup of 12 September 1980 and the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship it engendered. It is abundantly clear that such a republic is a CUP, Turanian, genocidal and belligerent one, as evidenced by its genocidal attacks on the Kurds, the Armenian genocide, its continuing hostility to Armenia, its sending of troops to Libya and its participation in the conflict in Qatar and Yemen. It is apparent that the policy is the same as that of the CUP during WWI and that the objective is in fact to regain what was lost during that conflict.

Can you discuss the agenda of international actors in the formation of the Turkish Republic, namely both of Europe, specifically Germany and the UK, as well as the Soviet Union?

We know very well that Germany and Britain were primarily responsible for the establishing of the Turkish state. It is an undisputed reality that contradictions and conflict between these two states and German and British capital brought forth the Turkish Republic. In the last quarter of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century the dispute over the Ottoman empire was between Germany and Britain. The Ottoman empire collapsed after WWI, which was a war between Germany and Britain. The Turkish Republic was constructed on the ruins left by this war. Although Germany appeared to lose the war and consequently to have no say in the post-war world and Middle East, this is a superficial perspective. Britain and Germany exercised great influence on the developments at that time.

In the re-configuration of the world and the Middle East, and also of the founding of the Turkish Republic, the influence and power of German capital, and, consequently, German politics, was present and paid attention to.

Undoubtedly, in the process of the acceptance of the Kemalist movement and the formation of the Turkish state, France and the Soviet Union also played significant roles. France, in partnership with Britain, participated in the establishing of the Turkish Republic. It was France that first reached an

agreement (Ankara Agreement) with the Kemalist movement, and, consequently, officially recognised it, as early as 1921.

It was Britain and France that were principally responsible for the division, sharing out and shaping of the Middle East after WWI. The two states had both an alliance and waged a war to share out the spoils. French capital always wanted a share of the resources in the Middle East.

As for the British, they were principally concerned with protecting the Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against Germany reaching India. When they realised this was no longer possible at the beginning of the 20th century, they developed a strategy that envisaged the partition of the Ottoman Empire and their taking over control of the Middle East. The English state went so far as to wage an open war over the division of the region, i.e. WWI. Along with France, Britain set forth the political developments that shaped the Middle East in their own interests.

Here we also have to mention the role of Soviet Russia. Czarist Russia had been in alliance with Britain and France. Following the October Revolution, although Soviet Russia did not participate in the alliance that Czarist Russia had made with France and Britain, in order to protect the interests of Soviet Russia, under the 'Strategy to Protect the October Revolution' it was involved in many political developments in the Middle East and South Asia, including the founding of the Turkish Republic. In this context, Soviet Russia was one of the states that gave the most political and practical support to the success of the Kemalist movement and the establishing of the Turkish state. This was carried out as part of the so-called strategy to protect the security of the southwest of the Soviet Union.

They viewed the founding of the Turkish Republic as appropriate for their own security, consequently, they offered disproportionate support to the Kemalist movement and the Turkish state. They ignored the collaborationist stance and genocidal reality of this state and its hostility to the Armenians, Kurds, Assyrians and Greeks. The development of the racist, chauvinist and genocidal state of Turkey was supported politically and practically because Soviet Russia considered this beneficial to its own interests. Although the Kemalist movement and Turkish Republic was shaped within relationships and conflict with powers such as Britain, France, Germany and others, it is an indisputable fact that, in the process of transition from the Ottoman empire to the Turkish republic and the development of the Kemalist movement into the state, Soviet Russia was one of the states that provided the most concrete support.

In essence, Soviet policy prioritised its own interests. This narrow policy had little to do with ideological principles and took form through the relations it established with the Kemalist movement and the Turkish state immediately after the October Revolution. By turning a blind eye to the genocides perpetrated by the CUP, Kemalist movement and Turkish Republic against the Armenians, Kurds, Assyrians and Greeks, it in fact abandoned socialist principles and the principle of self-determination of nations developed by Lenin. This principle was implemented when it suited the interests of the Soviet Union, but abandoned when it impinged on its interests. At that early time, the principles of socialism were sacrificed to political principles that prioritised the interests of the Soviet Union. It is known that the ideological turn, transition into revisionism and collapse of the Soviet Union took place on this basis.

Essentially, the reality of the Soviet Union, which prioritised hegemonic state interests above everything, began to manifest itself from the early 1920s onwards in the policies it followed in relation to Turkey. Its supportive stance towards Turkey against the struggles of, first and foremost, the Kurds, the Armenians, Assyrians and Anatolian Greeks, proved that it was not applying its own principles, and that when they conflicted with their political interests they would sacrifice them. It is therefore apparent that Soviet Russia was one of those responsible for the formation of the Turkish Republic and that with its support the genocides have been carried out in Anatolia and Mesopotamia, the centre of the world, until the present day. This mentality and policy has been able to maintain its sovereignty until today.

How do you evaluate Turkey's current agenda at a regional and global level? Often Turkey's agenda is characterized as 'Neo-Ottoman'; can you discuss what Neo-Ottomanism is, the vision it has for the region, and the roots of this policy and how it came to be adopted?

The Committee of Unity and Progress (CUP) government wanted to become a global imperialist power. It joined in the imperialist war of division of the spoils on this basis and with this mentality. As for the Turkish Republic, it wishes to become a regional, hegemonic, imperialist power, as it does not consider becoming a global imperialist power to be realistic. Instead, Turkey is convinced that it can become a hegemonic, imperialist power in the Middle East. It bases its global politics entirely on strategy and tactics that will make it a regional power and maintains its diplomatic activities and relations in line with this goal. This is definitely its strategic aim. It is able to make concessions in pursuit of this goal and relies on major global forces. Its relations with Britain, Israel, Germany and the US are on this basis. It joined NATO for the same reasons.

It also conducts a policy of threats and blackmail. That is, in order to become a regional imperialist power, it follows three fundamental lines in its policies on a global level. The first of these is making concessions, marketing its strategic position and capabilities. In this the Turkish state is like the administration of a marketing company. Since Mustafa Kemal all governments have pursued such a policy.

The second is reliance on the big powers. Originally it was Germany, then Britain and Israel, then after WWII, its relations with the US brought it into NATO.

The third is to pursue a policy of threats and blackmail. This has emerged clearly during the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship and has reached its peak. Previously, Turkey conducted this policy in a covert way by means of MIT (National Intelligence Organisation), issuing threats to various groups and carrying out provocations. However, with the AKP-MHP government this has become policy. A system has been established with several gang-like organisations emerging. From the Osmanlı Ocakları (Ottoman Hearths) to the re-structuring of the MIT, and the reshaping of the counter-guerrilla force. In fact, the AKP-MHP have destroyed the old state apparatus and created a new fascist

gang state. Going beyond Turkish borders, establishing relations with ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and predominantly with Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) and nationalist gang organisations that deem themselves Islamic in the Middle East, they have made Turkey the centre for such gang organisations that use the name of Islam in this way for their own benefits. All the gang organisations in Syria see Turkey as a base and are nourished from there. Finally, ISIS has become a structure that relies on the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship and is nourished from there. Turkey's relations with Al-Qaeda based on relations with Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria have reached an advanced level.

The effect of this policy of expansionism in the Middle East through reliance on these gang organisations and their power is apparent from Armenia to Libya and from there to Yemen. But they are not content with this. They have implanted a gang state in the midst of Kurdistan, from Afrin to Xakurke and are endeavouring to make it permanent. Moreover, based on this they are implementing a policy of threat and blackmail on a global scale. Thus, Turkey seeks to continue its policy of global threats and blackmail. It is evident that they are using all manner of organisation, from ISIS to Al-Qaeda, in this. The Paris massacre was one of the most concrete examples of this. Through ISIS it has had terror attacks perpetrated all over Europe, from Germany to Britain, to France and also to America, pressuring all states to accept and support their policies, in particular their expansionist Middle East policy by means of Kurdish genocide. Indeed, the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship has definitely been behind all ISIS attacks. The whole world knows this. The Russian government has already officially exposed this with documentary proof. Other states have a similar approach. This is what may be said regarding the Turkish state's approach to global politics.

If we look closely, at the centre of all these policies is the carrying out of a Kurdish genocide, expanding across the Middle East as a regional imperialist power and persuading all world states to accept such a policy. Without doubt this is the real strategy of the Turkish state.

It is clear that the political strategy called 'Neo-Ottomanism' has taken shape on this basis. The origins of this are based on the fact that the Ottoman empire was a hegemonic regional power. Consequently, there was always a dream, a desire in the Ottoman government to become a global, imperialist hegemonic power. With this dream and desire the CUP government of Enver joined WWI,

hoping to realise this dream that had persisted since the time of Mehmet the Conqueror. The CUP government simply adapted this policy to the new circumstances. This is what we can conclude on closer historical examination.

Yes, the present Turkish state is not able to have and pursue such a mentality and policy of becoming a global hegemonic power. It does not see it as a realistic option, not because it does not think in this way or does not want such a thing, but because it does not consider it feasible. Instead, its policy is to entirely Turkify Kurdistan by perpetrating a Kurdish genocide, to become a regional, hegemonic imperialist power in the Middle East and force the world to accept such a policy. This is now its strategy. This was the secret agenda of the Kemalist movement, and it has now emerged into the open with the AKP-MHP government. It is now expressed clearly and has been begun to be implemented. This is definitely what is being conducted at the moment.

How come AKP-MHP fascism has begun openly to express and implement this policy which was previously a secret one, to the extent of presenting a map at a session of the UN General Assembly? It is global forces that are responsible for this. The Turkish state has reached this position by taking steps, starting with the Armenian genocide and continuing with the Kurdish genocide. Just as these have not been prevented, no opposition was forthcoming either. In short, they were supported. Under the guise of 'combatting terror' a Kurdish genocide has been supported by NATO for 37 years. Since 1985 Turkey's war against the PKK has in essence been waged by NATO. While planning of this war takes place in NATO headquarters, NATO provides all manner of political and military support.

It is on this basis that 'Neo-Ottoman' policies and mentality have begun to be openly advocated and implemented. In the same way as no voices opposed the Armenian genocide, a blind eye was turned to the Kurdish massacres in Amed, Dersim and Ağrı and they were supported. Subsequently, such a state was admitted to NATO and provided with security. With NATO support it has been able to wage a war against the PKK for 37 years. A blind eye has also been turned to Tayyip Erdoğan's relations with Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood), ISIS and Al-Qaeda. His open support of gang and ISIS attacks have also been ignored. And they went even further: In 2015 a fake coalition was established between Turkey, which was supposedly fighting ISIS, and the US.

Hence, the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship now openly expresses the previously secret agenda of the Turkish state and implements it. It has been emboldened and found the world to be weak, getting carried away with the idea that no one can stop it. Using threats and blackmail against some, carrying out terror attacks everywhere to induce fear, while making economic concessions to others to silence them. Global forces have said 'yes' to this, turned a blind eye as it suits their economic interests and provided support. Hence, they have made the Turkish state under the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship an unbridled, aggressive power.

Yes, today this power is a monster. The Hitlerism, Mussolinism and Saddamism of modern times. And it is the Kurds who are suffering the most. Every day the Kurds are suffering genocide attacks. But everyone should be aware that just as Hitlerism and Saddamism threatened the whole world and adversely affected the interests of all states, becoming an enemy of humanity, the AKP-MHP fascist dictatorship has made the Turkish state, too, a global monster, a terror state and a threat to all humankind.

If this power is not overthrown, if Turkey is not freed of this fascist mentality and politics and is not democratised, in the near future all the people of the Middle East, all humanity, all women and the youth will suffer, as the Kurds are suffering now. States that are today gaining from the politics of AKP-MHP fascism will tomorrow be threatened by this monster and suffer serious harm.

Can you discuss the roots of the criminalisation of the PKK under the war on terror, and how this criminalisation has affected the development and the work of the Kurdish movement? Additionally, can you discuss the role of the war on terror shaping in the approach of global powers towards the Kurds, for example the bounties placed by the United States on three top KCK officials, as well as the Turkish state's own genocidal approach towards the Kurds; how is it that the international community allows Turkey to carry out a genocide of the Kurds by labelling the Kurdish movement as a criminal organisation?

It is a reality that global state forces declared the Kurdish movement to be a criminal organisation and permitted and supported the Turkish state's ongoing genocide of the Kurds. What is the origin of this? It stems from the fact that the mentality and policy that considers the Kurds do not exist and wants to eradicate them is a global mentality and policy. It originates from the fact that the Kurdish question is one that was brought into the open by global powers. These same powers do not want to resolve this question, for the hegemonic global states created this mentality and policy after WWI by dividing Kurdistan and establishing a genocidal domination within which various states perpetrate such attacks. This has caused profound contradictions and conflict between the Kurds and these states. The domination of the Middle East based on this conflict was intended to enable the exploitation of the wealth of Kurdistan and the whole region.

Those who divided Kurdistan and facilitated the Kurdish genocide are not harmed by this, they benefit economically. We need to understand this. Consequently, the refusal to accept the existence of the Kurds, the use of genocide against them and the division of Kurdistan, i.e. the 'Kurdish question', is something developed by global states that do not want this question to be resolved. If a resolution were found and conflict between the Kurds and other states in the Middle East ended, they think they would no longer be able to ensure their economic interests. Hence, they permit genocidal attacks on the Kurds. By selling arms and bringing Turkey under the NATO umbrella they have provided extensive political and military support for Turkey's attacks on the Kurds. They do not just close their eyes, do not just give the green light or do not just pretend that they do not know about all this. They are partners in crime alongside the Turkish state.

The global state forces simply don't want the Kurdish question to be resolved. Let us not forget the international conspiracy¹. Leader Apo² went to Europe and submitted a programme on the basis of a democratic resolution of the Kurdish question recognising the national democratic rights of the Kurdish nation. It is evident how an assault was mounted against this by the US, with the CIA directing the 15 February plot, endeavouring to prevent a resolution of the Kurdish question by having Leader Apo placed in a system of isolation and torture for 23 years on İmralı, ensuring the deepening of contradictions and conflict around the Kurdish question.

Who attacked Leader Apo? What did Leader Apo announce in Rome? Why didn't the European Union lend its support? Why didn't the US take a constructive approach? For all the reasons we mentioned earlier. We need to understand that underlying all today's policies are the mentality and policies that deny the existence of the Kurds and wish to eradicate them. This is a global policy, that they created. This mentality and policy were developed by the global hegemony of the capitalist states. They are the ones responsible for this genocidal policy. Consequently, they oppose those who want to resolve the Kurdish question by ending the policy of denial and of genocide and by asserting the Kurds' wish for freedom and national democratic rights. They oppose the promotion of the willpower, consciousness, organization and actions in practice for the freedom of the Kurds. They don't want the Kurds to be able to build their own democratic system. They support the mentality, policy and war that created the Kurdish question and, in order to justify this support, they say "I am waging a struggle against terrorism". This is how the concept of 'terrorism' is used in the present day. They have unfortunately reduced it to a cheap accusation. Whenever terror or terrorism is mentioned, it is considered an indisputable fact.

The Turkish state describes its genocidal war against the PKK and PKK guerrillas as 'combatting terrorism', and those states that created the Kurdish question and do not want it to be resolved cling to this definition in order to camouflage their support for this war. They utilise this to suit their interests. Thus, they try to conceal the fact that they are deliberately leaving the Kurdish question unresolved and that they are supporting the genocidal war of Turkey against the Kurds. It is necessary to call it 'legal cover' for their illegal acts. They say "Turkey has the right to combat terrorism. We support this struggle." Okay, but what does the Turkish state define as terrorism? It says Kurds are

terrorists. It sees the existence of Kurds and their freedom as terrorism. That is what it is fighting. Don't you see this? Do you consider the Kurdish people's struggle for national and democratic rights terrorism just because the Turkish state says so? Do you reject it? Are you in favour of the genocide of the Kurds? It's necessary to say this plainly. They use the concept of 'terrorism' to disguise what they are doing to provide legal cover. They are trying to conceal the fact they are committing a crime against humanity in their genocidal war. They are doing this in a deliberate, planned way. Let no one think they are not aware of what they are doing. On the contrary, they are doing all this very deliberately.

In order to provide legal cover for what they are doing they have developed various provocations during the last 40 to 50 years. We need to know this. Consequently, in order to legitimise Turkey's struggle against terrorism provocations in Turkey and abroad have been created. One of these was the attempted assassination of the Pope by Mehmet Ali Ağca in 1981. Mehmet Ali Ağca was a member of the MHP³. He was a counter-guerrilla operative working for the Turkish intelligence service, MIT. He dared to fire at the Pope in the heart of Europe. He must have received lots of support, from within Europe, too. Why are we saying this now? What does the failed assassination attempt on the Pope, carried out by an MHP member and fascist, have to do with the Kurds, with the PKK, with the genocidal war being waged against the Kurds? With this attack they tried to demonstrate how big a threat terrorism had become in Turkey, that it was a threat to the entire world and, consequently, how right and legitimate Turkey's struggle against terrorism was. In this way they wanted to conceal the illegitimacy of the 12 September fascist military coup, and to justify the international support the coup had received. That is why they called the attack on the pope 'terrorism'.

Of course, they later used the 'terrorism' of Mehmet Ali Ağca, a fascist counter-guerrilla operative, against the PKK and the Kurds. They gave the impression they were fighting the terrorism that hit the Pope, while in reality fighting the Kurds. They masked their war against the Kurds in this way. But even this was not enough. In order to legally legitimize their fights against the PKK and the Kurdish people, they also used Gladio to murder Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme on 28 February 1986. Straight away they spread a lie, claiming "The PKK did it. The Kurds did it." Thereby, from the threat of terrorism in Turkey to the attack on the Pope, they carried out an attack, described it as 'PKK terror' and, without any investigation and by covering up evidence, labelled the PKK

as an international terrorist force. For them Olof Palme was a good target, as assassinating someone like him, the PM of a country like Sweden, a social democrat trying to affect things on a global level, had absolutely no legitimacy. His murderer would definitely be considered very dangerous by all nations and states and would therefore be attacked by them. And this is exactly what happened. They started a witch hunt against the PKK. Based on this they spread the tale of what a dangerous organisation the PKK was and put it on the list of terrorist organisations. They constructed joint plans against the PKK and decided NATO would be in charge of the war on the PKK. PKK members in Europe were arrested, Kurds were arrested. There were the Düsseldorf trials, similar to how during the Hitler period there were provocations and attacks against socialists and revolutionaries. This time there were attacks on the Kurds and its revolutionary vanguard organisation, the PKK. They both supported the genocidal attacks of the Turkish state on the guerrillas, the women, the youth and the people of Kurdistan, lending them legitimacy, and they did this on an international level. Many states participated in these attacks. Germany opened trials and Britain gave the most support to Turkey. The US had supported the 12 September coup, and within the scope of NATO it took charge of the international conspiracy against the PKK. It was they who were behind Leader Apo being abducted and taken to İmralı, where for 23 years he has been held hostage in a system of isolation and torture.

When these policies were exposed and became unworkable, they put three companions who work in the coordination of our movement on the wanted list. This decision was very similar to the decision that had been taken against Leader Apo. Thus, they wanted to make clear that they are determined to continue this policy. In fact, they issued a shoot-to-kill order. The Turkish state prepares lists of PKK leadership members: red, green, yellow, grey. Then it slaughters all those on the list in an underhand way. With the support it obtains from NATO, its existing technology, and intelligence from the CIA and KDP it carries out these massacres. In the same way the US has also compiled its own list.

This is an important point: AKP-MHP fascism and the Turkish state prepare a list against the PKK and so does the US. It is striking how much their methods resemble each other. By preparing such a list, the US lends legitimacy and encourages the creation of such lists and the attacks by the Turkish state on PKK administrators. Based on this legitimacy, Turkey carries out a variety of attacks against the PKK and continues the Kurdish genocide.

Such are the conspiracies that even though they have been revealed there has been no change in the system of lies. For instance, although Mehmet Ali Ağca has been exposed his influence remains. Although it has been proved beyond doubt that those who murdered Olof Palme had nothing to do with the PKK or Kurds, there has been no change in the attacks that have been carried out on the PKK and Kurds or in decisions that have been taken. There is no change of policy or mentality. There is no self-criticism or admittance of the wrong that has taken place. On the contrary, there are efforts to again take decisions regarding the leadership of the PKK, claiming "the PKK is a terrorist organisation".

In July 2015 the AKP and US came to an agreement to have a coalition supposedly against ISIS. Turkey joined the coalition against ISIS and used all the support it obtained from the US against the PKK. On 24 July 2015 it attacked PKK camps with 70 aircraft. AKP-MHP fascism has not killed a single member of ISIS, not put a single member on trial. On the contrary, it is hosting ISIS. All ISIS going and coming is through Turkey. But according to the US, it supports Turkey because it is fighting ISIS! Doesn't the US know that Turkey uses the support it gets to attack the PKK? It is well aware of this, but it manufactures the legal cover. It says, "We are doing this because of the war against ISIS." When pressurised, it says, "We're not doing it against the Kurds," but the support it provides is used against the Kurds. The US, Germany and Britain know this, but they conceal it in order to deceive their public. This means the genocidal war of the Turkish state against the Kurds and the Kurdish question continues with its conflicts with existing states, and the US, Germany and other states gain economically from this. The Kurds become dependent on them and despite the fact they are supporting the genocide, they can pose as friends of the Kurds.

On the other hand, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria are even more dependent on them, allowing them to reap more economic benefit. These powers thus benefit enormously from the exploitation of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Kurdistan. In order to make money, the international powers green light and directly support the Kurdish genocide. They don't opt for a democratic struggle and don't attempt to change this, instead labelling those who are trying to combat the genocidal system terrorists and attacking them. This is the system that has been established, a kind of 'Kurdish trap' that is entirely based on lies, provocation, a genocidal mentality and the pursuit of profit.

The Kurds are ensnared in the trap, as it were. If they struggle, they are called terrorists, if they don't, they are massacred. There are powers who earn money from this and get rich. Damn such wealth, may they choke to death on it! It is necessary to oppose this and expose it.

Such things are not simple, without a purpose and without benefit. Everyone's responsibility is different, but there is a complicity. They are partners in crime as far as the Kurds are concerned and this can be traced back to the genocides of Armenians, Anatolian Greeks, Assyrians and Syriacs. Consequently, if this complicity emerges into the light of day everyone will have to account for what they have done. They are afraid of this. Hence, they are endeavouring to establish all manner of clandestine, shady relationships and alliances and direct a war.

What role does the PKK play within the KCK, and within the Kurdish movement in general?

First of all, it is necessary to make the following evaluations: firstly, the PKK is not a family, dynasty or tribal organisation, like the KDP and other Kurdish organisations. On the contrary, it is a Kurdish National Freedom Movement based on the Kurdish people, democratic society and free individuals. Consequently, it is the existence and the interests of the Kurdish people's freedom struggle that determine the ideology, politics, strategy and tactics of the PKK, not familial, dynastic or tribal interests. The PKK formulates its mindset and politics entirely according to the principles and interests of Kurdish existence and freedom.

Also, although the PKK takes notice of existing political borders, it is not an organisation that considers the division of Kurdistan to be legitimate and is not a local or regional movement. On the contrary, while taking notice of existing borders, it sees Kurdistan as one and as a whole, defining Kurdish society within a national entirety, not regionally, seeing the four parts of Kurdistan as a whole Kurdish society. It is a democratic society and Democratic Nation

movement that works with women, youth, workers, all sectors of society and religions and sects. That is, it views all such differences within the focus of freedom and democracy in Kurdistan and as represented on the basis of Democratic Autonomy and is able to remove any conflict or contradiction and create social unity.

In short, in the same way that the PKK is not a tribal or regional movement, it is also not a Kurdish nationalist movement, just one that organises amongst Kurds. It is also not a movement that only organises amongst Kurds, or only organises amongst men, or amongst Sunni Muslims. On the contrary, in accordance with the idea of the Democratic Nation it bases itself on everyone who lives in Kurdistan, whatever their ethnic group, sect, national identity, or region. It views all these as its own popular base and works and organises amongst all of them.

The PKK is also unlike other movements, such as, first and foremost, the KDP, in that it doesn't use the Kurdish question for its own economic-political interests and to develop its own system of sovereignty. On the contrary, it is a movement that has dedicated itself to winning freedom for the Kurds and to protect their existence and freedom. As a freedom movement it is committed to these goals. It is a movement for the security of all Kurds, a Kurdish self-defence movement.

It is definitely necessary to evaluate the PKK, its guerrillas and its popular organisation on this basis. In this context it is a movement that is prepared for self-sacrifice to achieve its goals. It is a movement that has dedicated itself to national freedom and existence. It fights against assaults on the Kurds, to defend the existence of Kurds, and is prepared to sacrifice itself in this struggle. It is not a movement concerned about interests and sovereignty. It does not want to establish domination over the Kurds, on the contrary, it is fighting to break the colonial-genocidal domination of Kurdistan and defending its existence and freedom.

Similarly, the PKK is different to other Kurdish organisations in that it is a struggle movement. It does not hold back from struggle on the grounds of overwhelming odds. It does not run away from battle and does not refuse to fight. On the contrary, every day it suffers casualties⁴ and pays a great price as it wages a selfless struggle.

What are the other parties? They are pacifists, submissive, concerned with their own interests and in gaining power. Aren't there any who are armed? Yes, for instance the KDP. If they are attacked they run away. They use their arms against the people, not against the enemy, the genocidal colonialist. When Saddam attacked they fled. ISIS attacked, they ran away. We know this very well.

Most of the other Kurdish organisations are the same. They are not prepared to fight and to make a sacrifice. They lack the courage to resist. They envisage a passive struggle. "Let us speak a little Kurdish, make a bit of propaganda for the Kurds," they say. That is all they want. They are not resistance movements. Whereas the PKK wages its struggle in a heroic and selfless way. In this regard, the PKK knows no limits.

We may offer other examples of the difference between the PKK and other Kurdish organisations, the PKK's role in the struggle for the existence and freedom of the Kurdish people and its importance in the national movement of the Kurds. There are serious differences between the PKK and other organisations. It is necessary to understand this difference.

The other organisations cannot even be called national movements. They are dynastic, tribal or family movements. The family runs everything and it passes from father to son. It has nothing to do with democracy or a national cause. They want to represent a centuries-old dynastic system today in Kurdistan. Unfortunately, they call themselves the 'Democrat Party'. It is a pity that they are also recognised as a Kurdish national force and supported by powers and various international institutions that call themselves the 'World Democratic Powers'. The irony, the contradiction lies here. Don't all these powers know what the KDP is? What a family/tribal force it is? They know, but their interests impel them to cover it up. Interests have blinded everyone. It is as if for material gain there is no trick that has not been tried or no lie that has not been told in this world.

As for the PKK's relationship with the KCK, the PKK is a party, a philosophy, an ideological force, an organisation, whereas the KCK is a political and organisational system we call Democratic Confederalism, a system of society consisting of an aware, organised people, a Democratic Nation. The KCK is not an organisation. Some people understand it to be so, but this is definitely not the case. It is an organised people, with democratic politics, consciousness and a democratic political administration. It is the Democratic Nation that

has developed into a system. The KCK is an expression of an organised, organic totality of the people. A political, social system, a democratic popular movement. This administration is not that of a nation state, it is Democratic Confederalism, a democratic system administered by the people themselves.

The PKK is the spirit, feeling, ideas and ideological-organisational line of a popular movement, but it is definitely not its administration. As for the KCK it has communes and assemblies with which the people administer themselves. The administrators are chosen in elections and leave in the same way.

The KCK is the democratic self-administration of the people. If this is evaluated on the basis of a body and soul entirety, the PKK is the soul and the KCK is the body. Consequently, the PKK's role within the KCK is to be its soul, to constitute the Democratic Nation line, its philosophy and its ideology, in this way educating society and supporting its organisation. It is a system of self-administration and the name of this system is KCK. The relations between the PKK and the KCK are on this basis. This is what the role of the PKK within the KCK and the definition of the KCK are based on.

Now is the KCK just comprised of PKK's education and organisation? No. The PKK is a fundamental force within the KCK, which develops and promotes the system of Democratic Confederalism, the Democratic Autonomy, i.e. the system of self-administration, and the idea of the Democratic Nation but there are other organisations and groups with partly different ideologies within the KCK. They too can educate the Kurdish people and organise them. They can take part in the KCK's administration. There is not just the PKK in the KCK.

On the condition that they accept the principle of Democratic Confederalism all different groups and ideological forces may participate in the KCK administration. But they are not on a par with the PKK. In that case they would be in an alliance with the PKK. They can have friendly relations, but carry on their own ideological struggles as parties. PKK-KCK relations may be described in this way.

In fact, it was envisaged that the KCK would become an organisation based on democratic politics without conflict, but the Turkish state did not allow this to happen. All legal paths were blocked and conflict emerged which is why the KCK system was unable to organise sufficiently. Existing conflicts prevented this coming to fruition. But Leader Apo and the PKK administration did not want

it to be like this. The KCK wanted to organise in an environment without conflict and establish relations with existing states. There were several ceasefires, and relations and efforts to establish relations, but the policy of denial of the Kurds' existence and desire of the Turkish state to eradicate them has rejected these efforts and AKP-MHP fascism has incited conflict. The present situation of conflict and absence of a resolution has emerged on this basis. Otherwise, this is not a situation desired by the KCK. And the PKK certainly didn't want it. But it was not able to steer developments in the right direction. Tayyip Erdoğan and Devlet Bahçeli wanted this conflict. They are responsible for all this, and they are persisting on it. This needs to be known.

How does the KCK view itself as an international actor and participate in relations with other international actors, such as governments and international organisations? What is its ultimate aim in this area, or how does it aim to be recognized by and interact with other international actors?

We presented a definition of the KCK in the previous reply. Hence, undoubtedly the KCK, i.e. the Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union, envisages developing relationships with similar democratic popular communities, democratic forces and democratic people's administrations in the region and the wider world as a fundamental foreign policy. In this context it is not a regional, nor simply a national movement. It is a movement that has a regional and global view of living in harmony with peoples. It is a regional and global actor. Consequently, it bases its work on developing relations and alliances with democratic forces, democratic administrations, democratic institutions and political organizations and seeks to create the organisation of Middle Eastern Confederalism, World Democratic Confederalism and Global Democracy Movements. It views itself as part of these and wishes to develop Democratic Confederalism movements at a regional and global level and with global democratic congresses. It seeks to establish relations and alliances with a variety of democratic forces, e.g. national movements, youth, women and workers. This aim stems from the understanding and politics of Democratic Confederalism.

Another aspect undoubtedly relates to governments and states on a global level. There is a nation state system and groupings created by these states. KCK's relations with states are important. Leader Apo defined this as 'state + democracy'. This is the theoretical line. That is, nation states plus Democratic Confederalisms. Forces and systems that represent nation states are clear and known. There will also be forces that represent Democratic Confederalism, such as the KCK and similar organisations.

The KCK envisages nation states and Democratic Confederalisms co-existing with relations and contradictions. This is the PKK's line and understanding and, consequently, KCK also envisages this as a way of conducting politics. It does not base its policy on removing states entirely straight away. It is clear that this is not feasible. It is a democratic popular administration, not a state administration. The KCK is a democratic system. But no state can be a democracy. A state may be responsive to democracy, which is what the KCK wants from states. It wants them to accept popular, democratic self-administrations. And to work with those self-administrations on the basis of democratic politics. The KCK envisages such a co-existence and democratic struggle based on democratic politics.

If states accept the KCK as democratic, popular, autonomous administrations, the KCK will recognise and accept those states. That is, it wishes to share the administration with them and thus achieve the co-existence of state and democracy. But if a state does not accept democracy, if it doesn't recognise the KCK and its democratic self-administrations and doesn't reach a solution with it, then it will create contradictions and conflict. Then, the state will cause contradictions to turn into wars.

The past failure to reach a democratic solution in Turkey resulted from this. The existing Turkish state did not accept the KCK and wished to completely destroy it. Initially it opened court cases and arrested people, that is, the so-called 'KCK trials'. When it saw that this was not effective enough, it instigated a war against the KCK's organisation and self-administration of the people. Since summer 2015 these attacks have been continuing, and the KCK is resisting. The Kurds' self-defence force, the PKK, is resisting and fighting for their existence and freedom. The present situation of conflict resulted from this.

Hence, it is necessary that the PKK's new paradigm, its democratic self-administration line and understanding of Democratic Confederalism be correctly understood and evaluated. Many forces are distorting it and state powers are misrepresenting it. When they hear the words 'people's self-administration' they think it means they will be disposed of. They see it as profoundly hostile, but this is not the case. If it were, then conflict would break out. Everyone has to be responsive to democracy.

The latest developments in the US and all over the world demonstrate that states have to be responsive to democracy. They need to be responsive to the democratic existence of the people. They shouldn't be hostile. They should accept the popular democratic self-administration.

Unless they do this, states will not be able to sustain themselves. They are destroying the world. The ecological situation is self-evident: drought, wild fires, floods, the planet is crying out for help. This is happening because of states' ideological and political stances that are based on a refusal to accept democracy and a pursuit of maximum possible profit. This will be prevented when notice is taken of democratic self-administration.

In short, we can summarise the KCK's viewpoint, and the way other forces should see the KCK, in the following way. The KCK bases its stance on being involved with states for the resolution of various social issues within relations and struggle. It wants to undertake the struggle on the basis of democratic politics. It doesn't want conflict, and if states do not resort to armed conflict, nor will the KCK. However, if there is an armed attack it will exercise its legitimate right to self-defense. It would have no other choice. Therefore, the KCK wants states to understand it and to approach democratic self-administrations correctly.

The KCK also wants other popular forces, democratic forces and democratic movements to understand it and be involved in sound relations with it. It particularly wishes to have strong relations and alliances with these forces and with democratic self-administrations, ecologist and feminist movements, and to be in solidarity with them. It envisages having global democratic conferences and developing democratic movements. It calls on them to be involved in such a relationship.

It also wishes to be involved with states in a relationship and a struggle. Neither solely a relationship without struggle, nor vice versa. It is essential to have this struggle within a framework of democratic politics and according to democratic rules, without conflict. In this way, it wants to find solutions for the problems caused by the existing system, removing all manner of inequality, slavery, repression and exploitation, and aims to make the world a more democratic, free and better place to live. It wishes to build units of Democratic Confederalism in which all the different social groups can organize themselves freely based on self-determination. It makes great efforts to establish relations on this basis and to create such an alternative, free and democratic world.

How do you evaluate the possibility for a peace process in Turkey in the present conditions under the AKP-MHP regime? Do you think it is possible to convince Erdogan to engage in a peace process, and if so what would be required to do so, or do you believe another government with a different approach in Turkey is needed?

Undoubtedly, nothing is impossible, even if there is only a slight possibility of it happening. Some things are more likely to happen than others. What is important is seeing these possibilities and evaluating them correctly in order to make them happen. In this context, is it possible to persuade Tayyip Erdoğan to engage in a peace process? This is something that is very unlikely to happen, with most possibilities having already been exhausted.

Such processes took place in the past. Tayyip Erdoğan gave the impression that he was open to this, but didn't follow it through in practice. Why was that? We think there are two reasons: firstly, the external environment did not offer the opportunity for a resolution of the Kurdish question and the development of a peace process. On the contrary, it imposed conflict. While many forces gave the impression that they were in favour of peace and a democratic political solution, in reality this was not the case. We are well aware of this. If that had been true then in 1998-1999 when Leader Apo went to Europe and presented the possibility of a resolution to the Kurdish issue on a golden platter, no

state would have rejected it out of hand. Germany and France wouldn't have abandoned Italy and the US would not have organised the International Conspiracy of 15 February 1999.

Consequently, states' attitude to the Kurdish question is clear, their masks have slipped. They are in favour of non-resolution of the Kurdish question and the continuation of the conflict. They benefit from this and target forces seeking a solution. They pressurised Tayyip Erdoğan in the same way. They pressurised the PKK the most. They attacked Leader Apo and the PKK. When our leadership announced a ceasefire, they could not find a place to announce it legally in Europe. On numerous occasions they insisted "you won't declare a ceasefire, you will continue the war." These impositions were both open and surreptitious, but what they wanted was conflict and not resolution. No state insisted on a programme or project for resolution. They made contact with us, learned about our ideas, our politics and our intentions. And if our intention was to work for a solution, to have a ceasefire, they attacked us in order to thwart our plan. The PKK was not put on the list of terrorist organisations in Europe when it was engaged in conflict, but when a ceasefire was ongoing. Consequently, we need to know what these states want.

Tayyip Erdoğan assumed at the beginning that all these states wanted a solution in favour of the Kurds. Therefore, he thought, "If I resolve the Kurdish question they will offer support." But after a short time, he realised the opposite was true, and he received no support. Tayyip Erdoğan was brought into power and supported by the US. Hence, he did whatever the US and NATO wanted. They wanted conflict and that's what happened.

On the other hand, there is the Turkish state, with its deep and clandestine structure and its counter-guerrilla force. It is nationalist, fascist, Turanian, racist and chauvinist. Devlet Bahçeli is in that clandestine government. Forces such as the MHP have been formed by the deep state. They are paramilitary forces.

Tayyip Erdoğan also has a nationalist streak, influenced by others, albeit not to the same extent. They also applied pressure, like the foreign powers. This internal-deep state does not want a solution and they directed Tayyip Erdoğan. As a result, the existing situation of conflict developed. Today, Erdoğan is part of a coalition with the MHP.

In fact, Tayyip Erdoğan has to a great extent exhausted the opportunities to democratise Turkey and resolve the Kurdish question. He has run out of credit. It was really the Kurds who gave him the greatest credit. They declared multiple ceasefires, held talks, were in favour of a solution. No one provided as much support as the Kurds to Tayyip Erdoğan. But he didn't use this properly and to a large degree has exhausted it. He was persuaded to form an alliance with the MHP. He has now got completely carried away by the mentality and policy of resolving the Kurdish issue by perpetrating a genocide against the Kurds and assimilating them and by continuing the International Conspiracy, rather than engaging in a peace process. This is definitely the nature of the AKP-MHP alliance.

First of all, he has to distance himself from the MHP and pursue a policy independent of it, otherwise there is no chance of a resolution. Today that appears to be nigh on impossible. If he did that would it be feasible? He no longer has the mass support he once had. Two new parties have emerged from within the AKP. Despite the Kurds and other downtrodden sections supporting him on numerous occasions, he didn't use this support well. Therefore, there is a crisis of confidence. Even if he pledged to do it, there would be little support from the Kurds, from women, from Alevis and from workers for Tayyip Erdoğan. No one would trust him.

Hence, it appears very unlikely that Tayyip Erdoğan would pursue a different policy. It is virtually impossible for him to commit to a policy aimed at resolving the Kurdish question and achieving peace. Distancing himself from the MHP and winning back mass support also looks unlikely. If he hadn't become engaged in such a racist-fascist-genocidal mentality and politics, if he hadn't attacked the Kurds as much, if he had maintained his social support, and if, of course, external forces had provided support for a genuinely democratic solution of the Kurdish issue and insisted on peace, such a thing would have been feasible. But at this juncture foreign powers are not doing this.

Tayyip Erdoğan cannot break with the MHP. He has lost domestic support. Since 2015 for 6 years he has been directing a genocidal assault on the Kurds that is unprecedented in its savagery and scale. He has destroyed graves and attacked holy places. The system of torture and isolation at İmralı has been intensified. Women have been insulted and suffered unacceptable inhuman attacks. Moreover, he has directed similar attacks on Rojava Kurdistan, carrying out massacres in Afrîn and Serêkaniye. He has attacked South Kurdistan and

perpetrated massacres in Bradost, Heftanin and Metina, emptying villages. Consequently, he has become the biggest genocidal killer of Kurds. It is now impossible for Kurds to trust this government, to trust Tayyip Erdoğan, or to expect a resolution from him. This is not plausible. It only remains for Tayyip Erdoğan to go, or be pushed. There is no other way.

Turkey cannot democratise with Tayyip Erdoğan and nor can the Kurdish question be resolved. This possibility has been exhausted. The opportunity has gone. There is a need for a new government for the democratisation of Turkey and a resolution of the Kurdish question. There is definitely a need for a new democratic government that wants resolution, and has a programme for resolving the Kurdish question by democratising Turkey.

The HDP is working to establish such a government. It is the opposition that are hindering this. There are obstacles within the CHP and its leadership and in the Millet İttifakı (People's Alliance). This situation is preventing the emergence of a government with the support of the opposition that pursues a resolution, but the stance of external powers is also important. While there must be an internal resolution, international politics are important for Turkey and the positions of NATO, the US and Europe are determinative. The same is true for the CHP.

If foreign powers really want a democratic resolution of the Kurdish question and a democratisation of Turkey and peace based on this and they make it clear that they want such a Turkey and government for the country, then political preferences in Turkey may change. Orientations along these lines may develop in society, and emerge within existing opposition parties, as they are influenced by external developments.

The other side of this is the internal struggle, raising awareness amongst the people, developing the anti-fascist struggle for democracy at all levels. The aim needs to be to educate all women and youth in particular, but also the workers, the entire working population, the Alevis and all oppressed peoples, and to form an alternative democratic administration on the basis of the Democratic Nation.

The AKP-MHP government has really angered and depressed the people. In these circumstances a desire for peace and democracy on the basis of a resolution of the Kurdish question may develop. The struggle inside Turkey has very important tasks. Revolutionary democratic forces have a responsibility to implement an effective anti-fascist struggle in pursuit of this. They need to have the right attitude and program. Moreover, the foreign powers must really back

a democratic Turkey that resolves the Kurdish issue. They must oppose the racist and fascist Turkish government and its genocidal attacks on the Kurds. They must not be allies of fascism and genocide. If this happens, an alternative democratic government including representatives of all peoples, all sections of society and all democratic forces may develop and, overcoming the Tayyip Erdoğan-Devlet Bahçeli racist-fascist dictatorship, create a democratic Turkey and a free Kurdistan. A Free Kurdistan would mean a democratic Middle East, as well as a democratic Turkey. It would really create a democratic life, for humanity based on women's freedom.

NOTES

- 1 Due to intense pressure from NATO, but also with the active participation of Israel and Russia, Abdullah Öcalan was forced to leave Syria on 09 October 1998. After an exodus lasting several months, which took him to Greece, Russia and Italy, among other places, Abdullah Öcalan was kidnapped in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi on 15 February 1999 and taken to Turkey. Since then, he has been imprisoned on the prison island of Imrali.
- 2 Turkish: 'Önder Apo'. This refers to Abdullah Öcalan. Duran Kalkan uses a designation here that is an expression of his great respect for and strong attachment to Abdullah Öcalan.
- 3 'Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi', fascist-nationalist party in Turkey, since 2016 in an unofficial government alliance with the AKP.
- 4 In the Turkish original the term 'Şehit' is used. A term frequently used in the PKK.

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