

Self-Description of Komalên Ciwan

2023

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1. Preface

Rêber Apo¹ said: “As youth we started, and as youth we will be victorious!”. It is very important to understand and make oneself fully aware of the meaning behind this statement. The youth has always had a fundamental and meaningful role in the liberation struggle of Kurdistan. As a vanguard of the struggle for liberation of the Kurdish people and Kurdistan, the Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK), has organised itself as a youth party and movement since its beginning. It arose from the youth revolts of 1968 and is continuing its struggle in this spirit to this day.

No major historical and societal changes can take place with an outdated mindset. But what is meant by an outdated mindset? An outdated mindset is conservative, afraid and full of doubt, closed to changes, static, powerless, dogmatic and schematic. In contrast to this, let us take a look at what a youthful mindset is. A youthful mindset is lively, dynamic, brave, creative, ready for action, progressive, searching and full of hope. An old mindset is an expression of a stagnant flow of energy, whereas a youthful mindset expresses a free flow of energy. If we understand it this way, then the youth expresses a revolutionary identity in a very natural manner. Of course, youth is first of all a biological-physical condition. However, youth identity is also mainly a societal phenomenon and reality. This is where the importance of the youth to organize autonomously in society is coming from. The ruling powers and systems of state civilization always defined the youth solely based on biological age, and tried to institutionalize their rule through the exploitation of the youths' physical power and the denial of its mental-imaginative power. We call this approach “Gerontocracy”, the reign of the elders. Gerontocracy is an approach which tries every possible way to keep the youth locked up in a cage, so it can be exploited for the systems needs, while at the same time controlling the questioning and rebellious tendencies of the youth. This is why the struggle for liberation can only be won if the youth can discuss and organize independently, and thereby become a force with an own will. No matter in which movement, organization or society – once gerontocratic mentalities and approaches become prevalent, they sooner or later stand in the way of process. One can imagine this like a flowing stream. If you build a dam, the water will build up on one side, while the other side will dry up. The amount of water flowing through, as well as where it flows can be controlled by using the dam. A dam that destroys nature through channeling a river is comparable to gerontocratic rule. It collects the strength of the youth and uses it for its own interest, but will never allow it to flow free and naturally. The character of revolutionary youths is to burst these dams, to not accept oppression and external control and to strive for change and naturalness – to strive towards being themselves. For this reason, a confident, powerful and organized youth is an essential condition for the liberation struggle and a dignified life. Renewal, liveliness, continuity, growth, sociality and the standard of leadership of each revolutionary movement depends on its level of youthfulness.

1 Rêber Apo, sometimes also Serok Apo, is a frequently used term in the Kurdish freedom movement. It can be translated as "Leader Apo" and refers to the founder and chairman of the Kurdistan Workers' Party and representative of the Kurdish people, Abdullah Öcalan. In the following, these terms are adopted untranslated.

During its march towards freedom, the Kurdistan Liberation Movement has always measured itself by this fundamental truth. The existence, importance and meaning of Komalên Ciwan in this struggle comes from this. The quote from Rêber Apo, “As youth we started, and as youth we will be victorious!” should be understood as based on this. With an outdated and aged mindset, great historical and societal moments and changes, like the formation of the Kurdistan Liberation Movement, would not be possible. Rêber Apo mentions the following example from his life: One day, an old man came up to him and said that fighting for the freedom of Kurdistan is like trying to make a dead, dried-up tree bear fruits and flowers again. The old man basically knows that it is possible, but he has simply lost hope. But the youth is not like this. In front of things that seem impossible, they say “It is possible and I will do it!”. In this regard, we ask ourselves, what is it, that Rêber Apo did? He made the dead, dried-up tree in Kurdistan bloom again. He turned hopelessness into hope and freed the energy of society, which was locked up in a cage. He freed society from its old-minded situation and made it youthful again. Since the PKK is a movement of hope, it never says “this is impossible”. On the contrary, no matter what obstacles and difficulties may lie in its way, the PKK will always say, “this is possible”, believe strongly in this and will always carry out its struggle in such a way. This is why this movement knows no obstacles, and has taken on its character and form in the hardest of times and under the most difficult of conditions. The spirit, the line and will of Rêber Apo are the core of the Apoist youth movement: the spirit that he created, the line that he developed and the will, that he built up.

The organization of the Komalên Ciwan is a product of decades of struggle. The existence of organization and a system like this in Kurdistan is a great achievement. An achievement, that was created with the blood of thousands of martyrs – from Ali Çîçek to Baran Mawa, from Leyla Şaylemez to Axîn Mahîr Dîcle – and with the effort and the sweat of welatparêz² youths of Kurdistan, willing to sacrifice themselves to achieve their goals. For this reason, it would be wrong to try and only understand the Komalên Ciwan in a schematic or organizatory way. The Apoist youth movement contains a huge range of meanings, which cannot be summed up in a few words or sentences. However, with this brochure we want to, at least briefly and in a concrete framework, create an understanding about the reality, work, and struggles of the Apoist youth, which is working in Kurdistan, the Middle East and the whole world under the name of Komalên Ciwan.

2 Welatparêzî can be translated as “connection and defense of one's homeland/earth“. The term was established by the Kurdish freedom movement and is often used by the population.

2. Organisation of the Komalên Ciwan

The Komalên Ciwan is the confederal system of youth organizations and movements in Kurdistan. Its full name is **Komalên Ciwanên Demokratîk ên Kurdistanê** (engl. Communities of the democratic youth of Kurdistan), however it is better known under the name of Komalên Ciwan. The Komalên Ciwan should not be understood simply as an umbrella organization of several different organizations. It is the democratic confederalist system of the youth in Kurdistan. With this in mind, all youth organizations, groups and movements in Kurdistan that want to join this system, can take their rightful place in the Komalên Ciwan. At the same time, Komalên Ciwan, as the autonomous system of the youth, takes its place in the general **Koma Civakên Kurdistanê** (KCK) (Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union) and has representatives on all levels. In this sense, the Komalên Ciwan sees itself as a force with a pioneer role in the building up of the democratic confederalist system in the whole society. All youths and young women, such as students, working and unemployed youths, as well as peasant youths, but also all nations and faith groups that exist in the region of Kurdistan, can organize themselves within the Komalên Ciwan. In addition to this, young women are organizing themselves autonomously, under the name **Komalên Jinên Ciwan** (communities of Young Women), as a force with a pioneering role, while also taking their place in all areas of the youth system.

The Komalên Ciwan sees its role and mission in playing a leading role in mobilizing the youth of Kurdistan. Therefore it doesn't only understand itself as a youth organization in the sense of political representation, but feels responsible for all areas of life and the struggle. It aims to organize the will of the youth inside of these societal areas, as well as to organize and represent the will of the youth as a parallel autonomous system. The Komalên Ciwan, with its organizations, communes, committees and movements, is organized in all areas of life, hereby taking its place in the fight against genocide, fascism and occupation.

2.a Ideology and Paradigm

The Komalên Ciwan is an Apoist youth movement, therefore it is socialist in its core. In its statute, the PKK presents its ideology as “scientific-democratic socialism”. The Komalên Ciwan is based upon this ideology as well, and works accordingly. The assertions by “postmodern” schools of thought, that claim that the time of ideology has passed, are far away from reality and are assertions, that are themselves charged with ideological conceptions. There is no life outside of ideology. Those that shout the loudest about being “rational” and “objective”, are doing this on an ideological basis. Whether good or bad, ideologies influence all of our lives.

But this throws up a few questions for us: which ideology do we follow? What determines, how we live? What are criteria and principles for our lives? We could ask ourselves many questions like these. Rêber Apo sums up all of this with the question on “how to live?”. He gives the following answer: “Either a free life or none at all!” For us, there is no other way of life outside of a free life that we can accept. Every life, that is lived under conditions of the acceptance of slavery and oppression, is no life at all, it merely means dying while being alive. In a country, that has been occupied and colonized; in a world, that is ruled by patriarchy and class oppression; and for people, that are faced with genocide, this means that life outside of the struggle is impossible.

The anti-colonial and real socialist struggles, as well as the national liberation movements of the 19th and 20th centuries have left us a rich and precious legacy. The preservation of this legacy is a fundamental task and responsibility of the Apoist youth. On the basis of the lessons learned from these fights and based upon the experience gained in Kurdistan itself, Rêber Apo brought forth fundamental changes in the paradigm. The observations of real socialism in the 80s and the analysis of its collapse in the 90s played an important role during the change of paradigm. After the collapse of real socialism, Rêber Apo expanded and deepened his search for freedom. The socialist struggles of the last 200 years have shown that the fight for achieving control of the state leads to us distancing and separating ourselves both ethically and politically from our goals. Power is a phenomenon that possesses the quality of corrupting a person as soon as it comes into their hands, no matter how good the intentions of the person were in the beginning. Power is like a disease, that spreads through the human body like a virus, that establishes itself in the head of a person and brings all areas of life under its control. Power and freedom, as well as the state and freedom are absolute opposites. The fact that they are opposites means, that our goal cannot be the establishment of another state. The state is the most basic and fundamental institution of the system of power. This is also why the idea, that people could reach liberation with the help of a state, is a tragic misconception. In connection to this, the institution of the nation-state, one of the main pillars of the capitalist modernity, and, with its nationalist, racist mentality, is the cause for many of the problems and crisis of our time. Whether in Kurdistan or in other occupied countries of the world – the thought that one can reach independence by achieving a nation-state status is a great self-deception, as we have mentioned already. Be it in Mesopotamia, the Middle East or in a different part of the world: nation-states have all been built up on the framework of denying the existence of a large number of cultures, languages and peoples, in the name of one identity, one

language, one nation and one culture. By doing so, they deny the natural condition of humanity. For example, the earth of Mesopotamia has, throughout human history, always been home to many different languages, cultures, faiths and ethnic groups. To draw the conclusion that the creation of a further nation-state would decrease the extent of the current crisis is simply false. For hundreds and thousands of years, the peoples and faiths of this region were able to live respectfully and peacefully together. Without a doubt, there were sometimes conflicts, however, the reasons for these conflicts were mostly the speculations and power-games of the rulers, much more than differences in culture, language and faith, but the ruling powers and their false mentalities, like nationalism. To achieve their own interests, and to weaken the ability of society to organize itself, the ruling powers have always tried to split society using all available methods. By using sexism, nationalism, religious fundamentalism and racism, they managed to put society at odds with itself, without becoming a target themselves. This is why the Komalên Ciwan strives for a societal unity that is based on respect for the wealth of societal diversity. The alternative of the liberation movement of Kurdistan is the project of the democratic nation, which includes different national existences, as well as cultural, religious and ethnic identities. By organizing and uniting all parts of society under the guarantee of the societal and political will of all, it overcomes the fragmentation and creates unity.

The two further main pillars supporting the capitalist modernity are industrialism and the capitalist logic of maximum profit. In this system, humans are exploited like robots and completely alienated from themselves and nature. Industrialism and the principle of maximum profit have alienated humans. The natural world is being exploited, polluted and destroyed. In cities that are emerging beyond human understanding and are home to tens of millions of inhabitants, life is increasingly being transformed into an endless simulation by technological means. In relation with this, giant armies of unemployed, which are especially made up of youths, are created. The workers find themselves in a situation, where they are ready to do anything to get a wage and to keep their job. At the same time, the destruction of nature, which is a result of the logic of ever-increasing profit, has increased dramatically over the last centuries and has led our planet to the brink of the abyss. Natural disasters, global warming and climate change, which hit the poorest and most exploited people and communities around the globe the hardest, are the result of the capitalist system. Against this system of capitalist modernity, the Apoist philosophy strives for its suggestion; **the moral-political society, eco-industrial society and democratic-confederalist society**. Within this framework, Komalên Ciwan fights against all centralist and hierarchical tendencies and strives to emancipate society through building up a self-government system, from the bottom to the top. On the basis of communal and collective societal standards and values, the youth movement wants to strengthen unity in society by creating unity among the youth. Instead of the exploitation of nature and humans, as it takes place in capitalist industrialism, the system of the democratic modernity wants to develop an ecological-industrial society, meaning a social economy that is based upon protecting nature and resources vital for our continued survival and one that only moves within this framework. It also means an economy that is organized according to the human need, and not a falsified economy, that is misused to harvest private property, money and power.

At the center of all ideological and paradigmatic problems of past liberation struggles, lies a wrong understanding of the woman's role in history and society. Regarding this, Rêber Apo says: "Until the woman is not free, society will never be free!". The social, political, everyday, cultural, economic (etc.) problems we are facing today are all connected with this aspect. Power and dominance established and continue to keep themselves alive through the patriarchal and sexist mentality. The first societal disruption occurred through the alienation of the woman from the center of life and society. Based on this, Rêber Apo and the women's liberation movement in Kurdistan, developed the **women's liberation ideology** and, on this foundation, organized themselves autonomously in all areas of life and the struggle. They also founded and built up their own party, the **Partiya Azadiya Jinên Kurdistanê (PAJK)** – Kurdistan Women's Freedom Party.

In this context, Rêber Apo developed the paradigm of the democratic and ecological society based upon women's liberation. The Komalên Ciwan is at the same time supporter and pioneer of this paradigm and leads all its work, activities, institutions and organizations accordingly.

The capitalist modernity is a wholly anti-social system. Liberalism is its ideology. This literally dissolves human reason and mentality, so the capitalist system may continue its existence. Liberalism is like a poison for the human body. It spreads throughout society and kills it off, bit by bit. It corrodes any form of collectivism. Capitalism itself is like cancer. That is why Rêber Apo said: "One should understand socialism as the antidote to capitalism". Socialism stands opposed to any form of exploitation and inequality and strives for the overturning of any kind of class rule which leads to a few people being rich and with full bellies, while the rest of humanity stays poor and hungry. But this does not suffice to define socialism. At the core of the class struggle is the gender struggle. The first division, fragmentation and class oppression in society was based on the enslavement of the woman. Capitalism is based upon this, but socialism draws its basis from the natural-communal society. Socialism is based on the values of the first forming of society, continued in the struggle against the first oppression against society and remained alive in the various struggles of women, slaves, serfs, workers and peoples. This is why socialism is not confined to the history of the last two hundred years of struggle, but embodies the history of humanity and the fight for freedom of the last millennia. Rêber Apo has presented, that the fundamental contradiction is not between proletariat and bourgeoisie, but between man and woman. The main problem is the system, that has established itself in society through a patriarchal and sexist mindset. For this reason, the socialist solution is the gender struggle. The socialist solution is the construction of a 'free life together'³, based upon the science of 'Jineolojî'⁴.

About this, Rêber Apo says: "Our choice of socialism is no random one. According to our societal reality and our enslavement, we must understand (socialism) as the human ideology of liberation. Pay attention to this, our understanding of socialism is very broad.

3 "Hevjîyana azad" is a ideological concept of the women's freedom movement that aims to establish a way of living together outside of hierarchy and oppression. It particularly focuses on the relationship between women and men.

4 "Jineolojî" (science of women and life) describes a new form of science in which history, biology, social questions and many other areas of today's science are illuminated anew from the perspective of women. Rêber Apo sees the development of Jineolojî as the necessary condition to overcome the existing patriarchal science that is interwoven with the dominant system.

Against death – the ideology of life, against the most dangerous slavery – the ideology of freedom, but also against passivity in life – the ideology of participation in life, against any form of numbing – the ideology of revival.”

2.b Main Goals

Our aims are determined by our ideas, our philosophy and our ideology. We are a socialist movement, therefore our goal is to build up a socialist life, a liberated life. In this context we want to bring an end to the system of the capitalist modernity, which builds upon a 5000 year old system of oppression. We are aware that social change does not happen in a single day, since the struggle as such will never come to an end. We believe that society cannot be understood in an absolute way. There is no true end of history. The flow of human society, of natural and social-dynamic changes and even the passage of time will never come to an end. Any other understanding would not be scientific.

Our most fundamental goal is the implementation of the ideas and philosophy of Rêber Apo and the realization of the dreams and goals of the martyrs. On this basis, and in connection with the continuing development of the struggle and the reality of the situation in Kurdistan, our region and the world, we have short-term and long-term targets and aims:

1. The destruction of the isolation and torture system of İmralı and the physical freedom of Rêber Apo.
2. The demise of the fascist-genocidal system acting against the Kurdish people and the expulsion of all occupiers from the soil of Kurdistan.
3. The setting up of a democratic self-government system in all parts of Kurdistan, in the vanguard of the youth.
4. The setting up of a popular front of democratic and revolutionary youths against conservative and despotic regional powers and against the interventions of the imperialist forces. Together with this, organising democratic youth confederalism in the Middle East and, through this, a democratic Middle East.
5. The development of international alliances against fascism and capitalism with revolutionary, socialist and democratic youth organizations and movements. On that basis, striving to organize democratic world youth confederalism.
6. The defense and development of an organized youth identity and of the will of the youth. In this sense, the creation of a new youth spirit, following the legacy of the cultural revolution of 68.

2.c Strategy and Way of Organising

As an autonomous part of the liberation movement of Kurdistan, the Komalên Ciwan organizes and conducts all of its activities on the basis of the **revolutionary people's war**. In the history of the liberation struggle of Kurdistan, several strategic phases were passed. The current phase is the fourth strategic phase of the revolutionary people's war and the construction of the democratic nation. The women and the youth were determined as vanguards of this strategy. There are three elementary forces in the strategy of the revolutionary people's war: **guerrilla, the people and self-defense forces**. In this framework, the youth movement conducts its work among the population, on the basis of creating and organizing **uprisings and protest movements**, as well as **self-defense units**. The strategy of the revolutionary people's war is based on the line of **legitimate self-defense**. This means that the war being waged is, at its core, a war of self-defense against occupation, oppression and violence. The liberation movement of Kurdistan does not see armed struggle and war as the only method for achieving the revolution, nor is it its' goal to seize power using military means. Armed struggle is used as the right to legitimate self-defense, to defend the achievements of the struggle, society and the democratic self-governance of the people. The Apoist youth movement sees its responsibility in enabling everybody in society, especially youths, to defend themselves against occupying forces, gangs mafia and traitors. The occupying forces in Kurdistan, mainly the genocidal Turkish state, commit the most brutal attacks against our people and our movement. They murder people, use chemical weapons against the guerrilla, torture people in and outside of prisons, they burn down and destroy villages and cities, they spread drugs and prostitution, especially among the youth, they try to recruit Kurdish youths as agents, so that they become collaborators of the occupiers of their own people, they loot and destroy the nature of Kurdistan, use a policy of hunger and embargo against the region of Kurdistan, they ban Kurdish institutions, and, using their diplomatic and secret-service means, criminalize the liberation movement everywhere in the world, with the support of the international, imperialist states and therefore isolate the liberation movement politically, diplomatically and economically. The occupiers also use thousands of visible and hidden dirty methods to lead open warfare, as well as a special warfare and psychological warfare, and use all means available to them to liquidate the liberation movement and to wipe out the Kurdish people. To free their country of this cruelty, the liberation movement, under the vanguard of the PKK and the guerrilla HPG/YJA-Star, is leading a campaign of self-defense in all four parts of Kurdistan. In this legitimate resistance of the Kurdish people and all forces that are striving for freedom, the Apoist youth movement sees itself responsible of playing the vanguard role. The strategy of revolutionary people's war, as the fourth strategic phase, was announced by our movement on the 1st of June 2010. Many times before, between the years of 1993 and 2010, the liberation movement declared many unilateral ceasefires, so that the path for political dialogue could be opened and a dignified peace could be reached. But the Turkish state, the Gladio forces of NATO and their collaborators, like the KDP, tried to misuse these ceasefires for their own gain and increased their attacks on the people and our movement. The state always answered attempts for a peaceful solution by Rêber Apo or the liberation movement by continuing its concept of war, destruction, liquidation and

genocide. The revolutionary people's war is an answer to this reality. The foundation of the revolutionary people's war is that the people do not make themselves dependent on the state. Instead, they need to develop solutions themselves and build democratic self-governance. In this sense, the revolutionary people's war aims to disrupt the concept of liquidation attacking the liberation movement of Kurdistan, to bring down the fascist-genocidal system in Kurdistan and to chase out all occupiers of the earth of Kurdistan. Hereby, the goal is to create the groundwork for a societal revolution of the democratic self-governance, and at the same time defending the already achieved progress made by the people, in building up structures outside of the state.

On this basis, the Komalên Ciwan is organized in all parts of Kurdistan. According to the characteristics of their location and the situation in their part of Kurdistan, each youth organisation uses different methods. Accordingly, different organisations will agree on different focuses. Especially under the conditions of fascism and war, building an alternative and democratic life is very difficult and there are many obstacles. For this reason, many fighting youths are forced into certain illegal and clandestine conditions. Still, most youth movements in the four parts of Kurdistan try to set up youth communes and councils in the villages, neighborhoods and cities, despite the conditions such as war, despotism and fascism. Inside of these communes and councils, committees for self-defense, education, action and organizing, art and culture, media work, sports, cooperative economy, politics, health and, if needed, also external relations, are created according to the requirements and possibilities of the commune. The youth works are largely organized according to these areas. Of course, at the same time there are also committees for working youths in their workplace or for students in their schools and universities, where they are organizing autonomously. In all of its organizational structures, the Komalên Ciwan possesses a equal co-speaker-system in its councils and leadership positions. In councils and leadership positions there is always one representative of the Komalên Jinên Ciwan, and all young women of the Komalên Ciwan are simultaneously members of the Komalên Jinên Ciwan.

3. Brief History of the Apoist Movement

The Apoist youth movement in Kurdistan has a rich history. It has its origins in the protest movements of the revolutionary youths of 1968. During '68, as the Vietnamese liberation war against the US-American occupation reached its climax, many other national liberation movements and guerrilla forces were fighting in many places in Asia, Latin America and Africa, and even in the Middle East the resistance of the Palestinian people reached a very high level. Inspired by this, many protests and uprisings occurred in Europe, North America, Turkey, Iran and many other places, often times in the vanguard of students and young workers. No matter how different the reasons for the uprisings were in each country, everyone had the feeling that the creation of another world was truly possible. In a historically unique way youth-led uprisings were occurring around the world at the same time. But it would be wrong to see the uprisings of '68 only as street riots. In fact, a cultural and societal revolution took place, that irrevocably influenced the social life and opened the door to radical changes. Seemingly for the first time, the power of youth was perceived by everyone. Young people, especially students, no longer accepted the reality, the system, the conservative mindsets and the rule over them. The spirit of the youth from all corners of the globe was united with the slogans: "If not you, who, if not now, when?" and "Another world is possible!", and caused the ruling system to tremble. Perhaps the uprisings in most countries did not turn into political revolutions, but they permanently shaped the culture and social life. Another important aspect of the 68s is that the youth also criticized the rule of real socialism of the Soviet Union. At the time, Dev-Genç (Revolutionary Youth) was founded in Turkey, and serious attempts for revolution and an armed struggle in Turkey were undertaken. Influenced by these developments, Rêber Apo, at the time a teenager himself, deepened his search and grew close to the Turkish left. When the leaders of these movements, Mahir Çayan, Deniz Gezmiş and Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, all fell martyrs and their movements were liquidated, Rêber Apo swore to himself that he would build up a movement that would never fail. On this basis, and having deepened his research and analysis on the reality of the Kurdish people and Kurdistan, Rêber Apo held a small meeting with six people on Newroz in 1973, and said: "Kurdistan is a colony".

From that moment on, Rêber Apo's great march towards victory began. At the time when the so called Ankara group was taking the first steps of struggle and organizing around Rêber Apo, all members were young. Rêber Apo himself was 24 years old. When Rêber Apo and his comrades took a step towards the foundation of a party, they did so in the spirit of the revolutionary youth. Similarly, the steps towards the creation of an army with the first guerrilla action on the 15 th August 1984 were also in the spirit of the youth. In the prison of Amed, the young leading cadres like Mazlum Doğan and Ali Çiçek led the resistance and won the fight of wills against the enemy, breaking through the lines of capitulation and treachery. The PKK was formed from a group of young students, spread like this and grew steadily. With the start of the guerrilla war on the basis of the strategy of protracted people's war in the year 1984 and the foundation of a peoples front named ERNK, the liberation movement outgrew the level of a youth movement and became a people's movement. For this reason it became necessary to found a special youth

organization, that was mainly supposed to promote the organization of youths in the universities, the connection to the guerrilla and the uprising activities in the metropolises. Therefore, on the 3rd congress of the PKK in 1986, the founding of the **YCK (Yekitiya Ciwanên Kurdistanê; engl: Union of the Youth of Kurdistan)** was decided. In the 80s and 90s, the YCK mainly organised itself in the metropolises of Turkey and Europe. In the framework of the strategy of protracted people's war, it was its duty and responsibility to build up a second front to support the guerrilla. In this sense, the YCK concentrated its activities mainly on making it possible for youth to join the guerrilla, organizing uprisings and protests and armed action against the forces of the state, such as police etc. Especially in the 90s, the YCK took the war that was taking place in Kurdistan to the Metropolises of Turkey, so much that in their reports, the mayors of Istanbul called the YCK the greatest threat to their region. The YCK was still organizing itself according to the old strategy and paradigm, and its role in this context was to support the national liberation army. However, in its spirit, its activity and its position it played a pioneering role for the people and clearly demonstrated the line of the Apoist youth in the struggle. It was radical, fearless, unpredictable for the enemy and played a vital role in the mass guerrilla movement of the 90s. After the change of paradigm, a fundamental change was to take place in the youth movement, and on this basis the founding congress of the Komalên Ciwan was held in 2005, after a long process of negotiations. The youth movement would no longer be seen merely as a supporting force, but would take on a vanguard role in all areas of the struggle, especially in the setting up of a democratic system of self-governance of the people. At the same time, the youth movement began to organize itself in all four parts of Kurdistan, in the Middle East, in Europe and, according to the current requirements and possibilities, in other parts of the world as well. Using the perspective of the new paradigm, the main task was now to overcome the difficulties with organizing the youth, to reach all young people in society and to enable them to govern their life in an autonomous system, while being an example of the liberation struggle and for the society. From 2005 to 2016, five congresses of the Komalên Ciwan took place. Also, in 2012, the Komalên Jinên Ciwan held their founding congress and started an autonomous organization in all areas of struggle. The Apoist youth movement, from YCK to Komalên Ciwan has taken on many important tasks and responsibilities over the course of the years and taken a leading role in many steps and fighting processes. To name a few examples: The enlargement of the ranks of the guerrilla during the 90s, the peoples uprisings against the international conspiracy and the capture of Rêber Apo in 1999, the uprising in Amed (tr: Diyarbakir) in 2006, the Rojava-Revolution from 2011 and the Kobanê-uprisings in October of 2014, the resistance of the autonomous administrations in northern Kurdistan in 2015 and 2016, as well as the **development of the new internationalism of the 21st century**. Most recently, on the 5th congress of Komalên Ciwan, the vengeance offensive for the martyrs of the resistance of the autonomous administration was started under the slogan "Destroy the occupation with revolutionary revenge!" According to this and in the framework of the strategy of the revolutionary people's war, works and activities for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo, the destruction of fascism, the expulsion of the occupying forces and the setting up of a free Kurdistan have taken place, even under the harshest of conditions of war. Not only in the last few years, but since the founding of the YCK until today, thousands of young pioneers and militants have fallen as martyrs in this struggle. The youth movement would have never reached its current position without these martyrs,

and thanks to them the youth movement took on a leading role in the critical processes of the general fight. Following the path of the martyrs, continuing their struggle and fulfilling their ideals is a fundamental principle of the Apoist youth movement. The Komalên Ciwan continues its struggle in this context, as history is not something that is in the past. History is now, and it is being written by the women and youths fighting for liberation.

4. Democratic Youth Confederalism and Alliances

Democratic modernity's political alternative to capitalist modernity's nation-state is democratic confederalism. Therefore, we also organize ourselves according to the system of democratic confederalism. The hegemonic, capitalist system is currently in deep chaos. War and crisis may belong to the basic characteristics of capitalism, but the crisis also always contains the potential to destroy this system. The climate crisis, the power struggle between the major players of the world (NATO, Russia, China), population growth, the rapid expansion of cities, the fast and unlimited development of anti-technology⁵ and artificial intelligence, fascism, the rise of gangs and mafia networks, the increasing number of femicides, the intensification of the economic crisis in many places and the increase of the periodic crises on a global level. All these and more are indicators for the current global crisis and the chaos that is reigning. A systemic war is being experienced at the level of a Third World War: this war is progressing from place to place with military methods, but especially the methods of special warfare and psychological warfare are being used. The basis for this is an ideological war for the continuation of this system. On the one hand, the global imperialist forces want to maintain their hegemony at the world level and are therefore ready to remove any existing obstacles. From a conservative and racist viewpoint, the interest of the regional status quo forces are the most recognized within the current borders of the nation, therefore they want the current status to remain the same. In addition, there is a third line, of freedom-seeking humanity in the form of democratic, socialist and revolutionary movements that resist against the other two lines. They want to empower themselves to build an alternative to the present system and thus demand a free and dignified life for all humanity. Under the vanguard of the PKK, the liberation movement of Kurdistan, including the Komalên Ciwan, are fighting for this third line. The fact is: even if the system of capitalist modernity is in deep crisis, the free life is not guaranteed yet. The destruction of the capitalist system in its present form does not automatically mean that something better will take its place. In this sense, Rosa Luxemburg's warning still applies: **"Either socialism or barbarism"**. Socialism, meaning, a free and dignified life, does not come about by itself, but requires organisation, struggle, war, effort and sweat. In order for the free life to become an alternative for all oppressed people, women, youth and workers, its leading forces must strengthen themselves. This is not done with appeals or demands for rights, but by dedicating one's organisational strength to the building up of one's power. The style best suited for this is democratic confederalism. Democratic confederalism aims to create a self-governmental system of society in local, regional national and international levels, outside of the capitalist system and the state. In this way, the strength of society gradually increases, while at the same time the current ruling system becomes smaller and weaker. To realise democratic confederalism, the anti-systemic forces must come together on the basis of common principles and form alliances on the one hand, on the other society must organise itself everywhere. It is necessary that they regain control over the self-defense and security, economy, justice, politics, education and administration of their

5 In our understanding, the purpose of technology lies in serving society's needs and bringing forward development. That given, we have to acknowledge that the trends of today are going into the opposite direction, causing destruction and dehumanization. Therefore, in order to use a correct term, Rêber Apo speaks of "anti-technology".

life, and in this way, refuse to trust solely the state institutions. The foundation of this system are the communes, councils, academies, and cooperatives. This way, the people will govern themselves from the bottom to the top. In his defense writing "The Sociology of Freedom" Rêber Apo clarifies who the anti-systemic forces are: socialist, communist, anarchist, feminist, ecologist, cultural and non-state national-ethnic movements and local autonomy movements in cities, neighborhoods and regions. In the framework of the united fight against capitalist modernity, these forces are strategic allies for the liberation movement of Kurdistan.

4.a Kurdistan

Since 2005, with the founding of the KCK-system, the liberation movement of Kurdistan has been trying to build up democratic confederalism in its country. At the same time, women are building up their own, autonomous system inside of the society, this is called KJK, Komalên Jinên Kurdistanê (Union of Women in Kurdistan). Inside the frame of the whole system, the youth organises itself autonomously in the Komalên Ciwan and is concurrently building up its own system of democratic youth confederalism. In this sense, Komalên Ciwan aims to be a vanguard in the construction of this system in the four parts of Kurdistan, through youth communes and councils, in order to form a determining will of the youth.

In the context of the Kurdish people's struggle against occupation and genocide, one of the most strategic goals is national unity. On the basis of realizing a national unity of Kurdish youth, Komalên Ciwan tries to bring together the Kurdish youth in the four parts of Kurdistan, including the youth that organizes itself in various Kurdish organizations and parties. The most basic rules of this work are: Patriotism (kurd. Welatparêzî = approximately: defense of the homeland), resistance to the occupation and refusal to cooperate with the occupying forces. No matter how many disagreements there are, it is through these standards that national unity can be formed. At the same time, Komalên Ciwan wants to bring together young people of all nationalities living on the territory of Kurdistan and build with them a system of common life based on the perspective of the Democratic Nation.

4.b Middle East

In addition to a free Kurdistan, the construction of a democratic Middle East is also one of the most elementary and strategic goals of the Komalên Ciwan. In this sense, the Komalên Ciwan is also a movement of the Middle East. What is happening in Kurdistan has a direct impact on the entire Middle East, but at the same time, the development of tensions and balances in the Middle East has a direct impact on the situation in Kurdistan. Kurdistan plays a key role in the Middle East. Kurdistan is divided among the four main states of the Middle East and is therefore at the center of all its developments. The main problem in the Middle East is power and the nation-state. As a result, two main problems determine developments in the region today: on the one hand, the Kurdistan problem and, on the other hand, the Palestine problem. Until the occupation of these two countries ends, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

For the Kurdistan freedom movement, the development of a democratic struggle in the neighboring countries is essential and should therefore be seen as the basis for the general struggle of the Middle East. In this sense, the struggle for a democratic Syria, a democratic Turkey, a democratic Iran and a democratic Iraq are the first goals. That is why the first alliance forces are oppositional youth organizations in these countries. The main criteria in the development of alliances is to reject nationalism and sectarianism, which divide society, and to consider the fraternity of peoples as an essential common criteria. On this basis, a common struggle can develop in these countries.

Although the Middle East actually describes the region from Egypt to the Black Sea and the Arabian Peninsula, there is a strong cultural-historical relationship with the other countries in North Africa from Egypt to Morocco, so these countries can also take their place in the democratic confederalism of the Middle East. The strategic allies include in particular the youth of the oppressed and stateless peoples who are fighting against occupation, as for example the Palestinian and Amazigh youth. Likewise, all patriotic, democratic and freedom-loving youth organizations can gather under the umbrella of democratic confederalism and wage a common struggle.

4.c Global

At the international and global level, the Apoist youth movement is fighting for the revival of the spirit of internationalism. In this sense, an attempt is being made to build broad alliances with all anti-systemic youth forces. This is done within the framework of democratic world youth confederalism. Internationalism is a great value in the struggle for freedom. The knowledge that the fate of all the peoples of the world is interconnected, as well as the knowledge that capitalism has achieved global domination and tries to create a monochrome world and a uniform human type with its ideology of liberalism in the name of individual freedom and fake diversity, is equally important in this context. Freedom is a universal value, it cannot be achieved in just one place. For us, this means that a free Kurdistan is not possible in a capitalist world. The system of capitalist modernity is hegemonic on a global scale. Breaking this system, overcoming it and building a free life is possible if we also organize ourselves on a global scale. In the current situation, the democratic world confederalism of the peoples aims at the solidarity and unity of the freedom-loving anti-systemic forces. In other words, the socialist, democratic and revolutionary forces around the world should strengthen each other, support each other and strengthen each other's struggles. This means that all fighting forces are connected with each other both ideally and practically, exchange current knowledge and experience and even mobilize for other in critical times. The vanguard of this alliance are women and youth.

The measure and principles of strategic alliances on the level of internationalist struggle are resistance to the capitalist system and resistance to all forms of tyranny, occupation, oppression, genocide and exploitation. Fundamentally, what is needed is love for humanity, sisterhood of the people, as well as mutual respect and acceptance of differences. On the basis of acceptance, respect and recognition of each other's cultures, a revolutionary common culture can also be developed through the protection of cultural riches.

5. Conclusion

Some people may say that we are utopian, but we say: We don't want a life without dreams and ideals. As if he were digging a well with the tip of a needle, Rêber Apo built up a revolutionary movement in Kurdistan and restored hope for life for an entire people. What does this prove to us? If a person has faith, perseverance and conviction and adheres to the values of this conviction, then there is no obstacle that they cannot overcome. We cross the boundaries that have arisen in our minds, we tear down the walls that have been established between us, we break through the barriers that block our way. We have chosen to live a free life, and no power in the world can distract us from doing so.

Some people may say that our approach is neither scientific nor realistic, but science has already made clear that capitalism is not without alternatives, and reality is a human-made phenomenon. In history, the ruling powers have seen all possibilities to destroy our lives, alienate us from our reality, our history and our society, put on blinders and spread darkness. But that does not apply to us anymore. In battle, we have tasted the sweet taste of freedom, and it is impossible to return to the bitter taste of slavery anytime soon. Those that enlighten our path are the martyrs and the line of Rêber Apo. Our promise is to remain committed to our goals and methods through connection to the martyrs and to march successfully towards freedom. When the arrow leaves the bow, there is no stopping and no turning back. Our arrow has left the bow and is on its way to freedom. With this in mind, we greet all wêlatparêz youth of Kurdistan, struggling youth of the Middle East and freedom-loving youth in the world and wish them all the success!

Executiv Council of the Komalên Ciwan

Medya Defense Areas, April 2023