

REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S WAR

ŞERÊ GELÊ ŞOREŞGERÎ



- A BRIEF INTRODUCTORY BROCHURE -

riseup4rojawa.org

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INTRODUCTION

The given text, titled 'Revolutionary People's War – Şerê Gelê Şoreşgerî', is an important introduction to better understand the current strategy of the PKK. This introductory brochure was prepared by the #Riseup4Rojava network, based on transcriptions from an education on the Kurdish Freedom Movement. This introductory brochure is intended to serve as a guide for discussion, education and for better analyses, understanding the current situation we are in around the globe, and for developing a perspective with a practice of what is to be done. With further brief introductory brochures on topics such as Special Warfare, and on Internationalism, the latter text written by Riza Altun, our goal is, on one side, to strengthen the understanding of Democratic Confederalism and the Strategy of Revolutionary People's War and to deepen strategical discussions in our broader network, and on the other side, to create a strong common perspective of our role, as the global resistance movement, in the defense of the Revolution of Rojava, the smashing of Turkish Fascism, and the build-up of Rojava everywhere. The urgency for this has become more clearer these days, given the increased attacks onto the Free Mountains of Kurdistan, the revolution of Rojava and the immediate threat for all democratic forces of the world. The importance of understanding the connection between the Free Mountains of Kurdistan and Rojava is also elaborated in the last KCK statement – which includes an evaluation of the current political situation. After all, it is an attack on all of us who are part of the global resistance movement.

REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE’S WAR – ŞERÊ GELE ŞOREŞGERÎ

Revolutionary People’s War is the Kurdish Freedom Movement’s strategy since 31. May 2010. The ideology of the PKK – the Kurdish Worker’s Party, founded in 1978 – oriented around scientific socialism when it was founded. Since the new paradigm, Abdullah Öcalan (Rêber Apo) uses instead the term Democratic Socialism, also in order to avoid confusion with real-socialist states.



From the beginning of the PKK’s foundation until the year 2003, the paradigm, which was based on non-dogmatic Marxism-Leninism – with the aim to establish a nation-state – changed since 2004 to Democratic Confederalism based on Women’s Freedom, Radical Democracy and Social Ecology. In the Defense Writing “Parastina Geleki”,² published in the year 2004, the new line of legitimate self-defense and especially in the fifth volume of the “Manifesto of Democratic Civilization” the strategy of ‘Revolutionary People’s War’ has been introduced for the first time by Rêber Apo.

The first half of this brochure deals with background information, while the second half goes into the topic of Revolutionary People's War – Şerê Gelê Şoreşgerî. The structure of this brief introductory brochure will first present an overview of the PKK's different strategic phases. However, before elaborating upon the evolution of the PKK's different strategic phases, it is important to provide a brief excursion on violence, war, and morality, as well as a bit of background on Mao's strategy of Long Lasting People's War and its international influence, that had an impact on the PKK as well. We will then discuss what is meant by Revolutionary People's War (Şerê Gelê Şoreşgerî), the civilian HPC/ HPC-Jin/ HPC-Ciwan forces in Rojava, and elaborating upon the stages of Revolutionary People's War following PKK's understanding of it. The brochure concludes by presenting the forces in Bakur and Turkey, and providing an example of Revolutionary People's War in Bakur.



THE PKK'S STRATEGIC STAGES

The PKK's history has consisted of four strategic stages:

- 1.1973–1978:** Building the Revolutionary Organization: Starting from Rêber Apo's conclusion that Kurdistan is under occupation and must be liberated, a group [the Ankara Demokratik Yüksek Öğrenim Derneği (ADYÖD)] is organized, laying the foundation for becoming a party. Hence, it is the stage of becoming a party with a program etc.
- 2.1978–1993:** The Revolution of Resistance and of Revival (Şoreşa Berxwedan û Vejînê): This phase is starting with the establishment of the PKK. Following Maoist Strategy of Long Lasting People's War, the aim was to build a Kurdish nation-state with the strategy of guerrilla warfare, and to revive the Kurdish existence that has been attempted to be erased throughout history.
- 3.1993–2010:** Democratic Solution: The PKK made many attempts and declared more than ten unilateral ceasefires to find a democratic solution with the Turkish state, while the armed struggle continued. The DHP, the first party embracing the Kurdish Freedom Movement, was founded and participated in elections for the first time. Different forces in the movement, but not the party, pushed for different strategic lines; so it was a time of uncertainty and reconstitution.
- 4.2010–present:** Revolutionary People's War: This is considered the last stage to find a solution for the Kurdish question. It is a strategy of war. The Rojava Revolution happened in this stage. The whole life of the society, economy, etc. must be organized according to war, creating the Reality of a Fighting People (Rastiya Gelê Şerker) – a mentality of not leaving, but of staying and of defending what has been built up.

VIOLENCE AND WAR

To better understand the topic of warfare and violence we have to re-question how they are used and understand what is important for us. Especially these terms are manipulated and used according to the interests of oppressing powers. So we need to clarify these terms for ourselves. Shown clearly in the neolithic society (ranging approximately around 12000 BC to 4000 BC), violence was predominantly used to secure a society's continuous life against dangers and attacks. The quality and aim of violence has changed with the appearance of centralist civilizations. In centralist civilizations, violence was institutionalized and the aim of institutionalized violence was no longer to secure continuous life, but to annihilate and to break the will of the people, to oppress and to exploit. However, the first centralist civilization was not installed by violence but by persuasion. The Ziggurat temple of the Sumerians³ attracted many people by its ideology and increased production. Soon the enslavement of people not voluntarily joining and the conquest of surrounding villages began. A class of violence, which consisted of soldiers, developed. War, which is organized violence, appeared with the appearance of states. States are systems based on the use of constant violence.



THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF VIOLENCE, THAT ARE CRUCIAL TO DISTINGUISH:

- **Violence for oppression:** illegitimate warfare and violence, against society, imposing exploitation and oppression.
- **Violence for resistance:** legitimate violence/self-defense, in favor of society, fighting against exploitation and oppression for life, liberation and freedom.

Societies always suffer in a war whether it is legitimate or not. But states have used violence as their monopoly to centralize it in their hands. They condemn the use of violence by society. They have put people's uprisings in the worst light possible, calling them terrorists or criminals with no other aims apart from causing chaos and destruction. We must see the truth of the states' propaganda. In order to defend our continued lives and values, we must defend ourselves. Legitimate self-defense does not necessarily mean to wait until the enemy physically attacks, but it is also legitimate to take steps to fight back against an oppressive system.

After the Commune of Paris, more people were inspired to study about self-defense. The thousands of years of history of centralist civilizations mean that states have gained much experience in oppressing people's uprisings. Insurrectionist anarchists conducted small isolated attacks like assassinations of aristocrats to spark uprisings, which did not succeed as intended.

In 1907, Lenin wrote about organized uprisings as a response to mistakes in the failed 1905 revolution in Russia. The Russian Revolution in 1917 followed this strategy to take over important points of the enemy and the revolution succeeded with little bloodshed. The Revolution of Rojava followed a similar strategy to take over strategic points of the enemy and in many places only few clashes occurred (2012).

The continuous development of weapons and war technology has changed the way of warfare and has led to increased distance between opposing fighters. Hegemonic forces are developing technologies used for their warfare tactics that are highly focused on gathering information, manipulation and are focused for the sole purpose of killing and destroying life; hence, people's forces need to be creative and develop new methods of countering the enemies technology and invent new tactics.

When Lenin was asked how the Red Army could succeed in the Russian Revolution against the very powerful counter-revolution, he answered: "Organization, organization, organization." The revolution was not only militarily well-organized, but it was also managed to include peasants within the Bolsheviks and society organized in such a way to mobilize their own forces. Many international revolutionaries joined the Red Army to fight. In the beginning, before Stalin, the Soviet Union understood itself as the starting point for an international revolution, not within the boundaries of one state. The Russian Revolution was highly influential for subsequent revolutionary struggles worldwide, and the mistakes and victories learned from it led also to the success of the revolution in Rojava.



MORALITY, RULES AND LAWS OF WAR

The morality, rules, and laws of war have changed over time, and eroded in the course of the 20th Century. In earlier times, wars were fought in the style of two armies, facing each other on a battlefield, often without attacking settlements, and the defeated side on the battlefield capitulated. A morality of war existed and soldiers were taught this. Rules of how to treat civilians and war prisoners, etc. were developed and respected over a long time. Dead bodies are something holy to respect and in prior times it was normal to exchange the dead bodies of fighters between enemies, while nowadays hegemonic powers, such as NATO's Turkish state and its jihadist allies do not have any morality anymore and do not give back dead bodies or stick to any agreements. Here we can also mention how the Turkish state was even burning their own soldiers bodies to destroy any evidence of their losses in the Medya Defense Areas. The videos showing this were shared by the HPG in 2022. This example shows us how deep the special warfare and the loss in morality of the Turkish state is. Even if the enemy does not have any morality in war, revolutionary forces must set themselves own moral rules of war, e.g. of how to treat injured enemies in order to not lose our own morality.

MAO'S STRATEGY OF LONG LASTING PEOPLE'S WAR

In China, Mao participated in a non-leading position in peasant's uprisings in 1920 and in 1927. When the uprising of 1927 failed to defend itself, Mao decided to move to the mountainous region in the North of China on the border to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union supported and educated Chinese communists. China was a half-colonial and a feudal peasant country. Since the societal conditions were completely different from the Soviet Union and Europe, Mao developed a new strategy in a dialectic way and became globally the first guerrilla strategist.



The Chinese revolutionaries liberated some territories and after a few years faced a big threat from the enemy. At that time Mao was not the leader of the revolutionary forces, but a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In face of this threat, Mao proposed to let the enemy units enter the liberated territories, cut them off, and attack them. His comrades opposed this tactic and the Chinese Red Army was heavily defeated. In response, Mao became the military strategist of the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese revolutionary struggle took 29 years from 1920 to the victory of the revolution in 1949, so it was indeed long lasting.

THE STRATEGY OF LONG LASTING PEOPLE'S WAR, INITIALLY INSPIRED BY MAO, CONSISTS OF THREE STAGES:

1. **Strategic Defense:** The first stage in Long Lasting People's War is strategic defense. Revolutionaries can start with a small group, as the revolution in Cuba also showed, namely starting with around 60 people in the beginning. Armed propaganda during this stage is important. As Che Guevara defined as a key rule for this stage, it is crucial to only attack when we are sure to win. Since the enemy is much stronger in numbers, we cannot lose any single comrade, even if the enemy loses more soldiers. Crucial is not to fall into the enemy's trap of encirclement, containing the whole guerrilla in one small territory. Therefore, the guerrilla has to move constantly and form small units, fixing the enemy to a certain point. The guerrilla must be able to dictate the locations and moments of confrontation with the enemy. If the enemy succeeds to encircle the guerrilla and they cannot break through, the guerrilla will face difficulties to turn the situation for their advantage – as happened to Che Guevara in Bolivia.
2. **Strategic Equilibrium/Stalemate:** After the people's army has grown, there are Red Territories under its control, white areas under the enemy's control, and orange areas under contested and changing control between both sides, in which both cannot move freely. The red areas form the base for education.
3. **Strategic Offensive:** The cities are the fortresses of the enemy, because they are important for them. It is important to encircle them, and stage uprisings there. The guerrilla ideally evolves into a full people's army and needs similarly strong weapons, which in the case of China only worked with the Soviet Union's support and in the case of Vietnam with the support of China.

MAOIST GUERRILLA WARFARE INTERNATIONALLY

Mao and his revolutionary guerrilla warfare inspired many revolutionaries worldwide, and many, mainly in Asia and Africa, adopted Mao's strategy more or less successfully. The strategy worked well for the PKK in the whole of Kurdistan from 1984 to the 1990s until reaching strategic stalemate, after some mountainous territories had successfully been liberated. The uprisings in Bakûr (North Kurdistan) in the early 1990s were possible thanks to the increasing forces of the movement. Rêber Apo analyzed extensively, why the situation got stuck in the stalemate and why no further advancement was possible.

Some urban revolutionary groups, e.g. from Uruguay like the Tupamaros (1967 – 1972), or the RAF (Red Army Fraction) in Germany, adopted Mao's strategy in the cities in their beginnings. The RAF rooted itself in some proletarian neighborhoods. The German state closed many streets and airports by a high number of police to encircle the RAF and defeated its first generation.

Vietnam is a successful example of a Long Lasting People's War. As part of Indochina, it was under French occupation and control. Revolutionaries built up peasants' councils in rural areas. The uprising of 1931 was fought and Ho Chi Minh went to exile. He sent a message to the revolutionary teacher Vo Nguyen Giap to go to China. Giap followed the order, and later returned to Vietnam to start the armed revolutionary struggle with 34 people. They were able to expel France due to France's defeat in World War II. Japan replaced France as a colonizing force in Vietnam, oppressing Vietnam, until Japan was defeated in World War II in 1945. When France again attempted to colonize Vietnam, the Vietnamese revolutionaries decided to dissolve their army into small units, because they were aware of not being strong enough to confront the French army directly.

They could defend themselves successfully for nine years. The victory of the Vietnamese revolutionaries led by Ho Chi Minh and Giap as commanders in the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 inspired many liberation movements worldwide.

Soon after, a group of 60 revolutionaries, trained by Spanish republicans in the Mexican mountains, sailed to Cuba to start the revolution there. China educated several hundred international revolutionary cadres mainly from Africa in a training camp, but had to close the training camp due to international pressure. Che Guevara called to create many Vietnams at the Tricontinental Conference (1966) and to start guerrilla warfare immediately to use the weak moment of the imperialists. The concept of guerrilla warfare spread more among revolutionaries.

Many Middle Easterners joined the Palestinian liberation movement's guerrilla struggle against the Israeli occupation and studied in the education camps there. Many have called themselves Fedayeen, meaning an ideal of sacrificing one's life if necessary for the revolutionary cause. Many Turkish revolutionaries, such as from the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist (TKPML) and also Nicaraguan revolutionaries, received education in Palestinian academies. The Turkish revolutionaries returned to Turkey and started guerrilla warfare, but were soon defeated. Overall, as we can see, in revolutionary history, experiences and knowledge have been passed on in international education camps from one movement to the other. The Soviet Union stopped its support for international revolutionary movements due to their policy of peaceful coexistence, which already started in the late 1950s and was fully implemented in the late 1960s. This also means that the PKK did not get support from the Soviet Union at any time. Despite being Marxist-Leninist, many of the international revolutionary movements – including the PKK – had a critical position towards the Soviet Union.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PKK'S STRATEGY

As briefly introduced above, within the history of the PKK, there have been four strategic stages, namely **(1) Building the Revolutionary Organization;** **(2) Maoist Strategy of Long Lasting People's War;** **(3) Democratic Solution;** and **(4) Revolutionary Peoples' War.**

After building up the revolutionary organization up until 1978, the PKK made their first experiences with armed struggle in the late 1970s in attacks, mainly assassination, against secret service agents and feudal landlords which were collaborating with the state. The PKK could take over some villages and civilians started to take up arms. In response to regain control, Turkey staged a military coup. Rêber Apo left Turkey for Syria and the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon in 1979 before the military coup. As he arrived there, Rêber Apo called few hundred comrades to come from Bakur (North Kurdistan) to the Bekaa Valley to start education. They studied, among other, a brochure on guerrilla struggle by Che Guevara.⁴

On 15th August 1984, the PKK started the armed struggle by returning to the mountainous Botan region in Bakur with Armed Propaganda Units, calling also upon the population to join the Guerrilla. The population already knew the PKK from before and sympathized with it, but felt powerless to stand up against the Turkish state in light of the massacres since the 1920s, which resulted in around one million Kurds being murdered. Frantz Fanon developed the theory of the last being first, also in firing bullets, in anti-colonial struggles in his famous book 'The Wretched of the Earth'.⁵ By freeing themselves from the colonizers, the oppressed people can fight and win also against the colonial mentality. The successful actions by the PKK and its long-waged struggle has given people around the world a lot of hope.

With the first Gulf War in 1991, the USA started to further their predominant presence in the Middle East, attempting to fill the vacuum after the fall of the Soviet Union. The USA have aimed at being the leading force for a global capitalist world order, and therefore liquidating revolutionary movements, which is reiterated with their Greater Middle East Project in the early 2000s. Many socialist forces were defeated or liberalized. The Palestinian revolutionary movement slowly became weaker. Islamist forces have become stronger in the Middle East since the 1980s, and filled the gap of the decreasing revolutionary movements.



In 1993, the PKK conducted political actions in Germany. In the same year, the NATO decided to liquidate the PKK conjointly and many European states banned the PKK and listed it as a terror organization. The Turkish state started military operations and heavily attacked everywhere in Bakur to empty it of its population by burning down villages and forests and committing massacres to separate the PKK from the people. In 1996, the MIT (Turkish Secret Service) under the command of the prime minister of the state Tansu Çiller (1993–1996) attempted to assassinate Rêber Apo with a bomb in the party's

academy in Damascus, but failed. In 1992, the first South War and the Turkish invasion in Başûr occurred. In 1993, a ceasefire was agreed; it was the start of the third stage of the PKK, namely Democratic Solution. Rêber Apo uncovered that the enemy was not only the Turkish state but also the whole NATO behind it. The NATO has not supported a Democratic Solution and denied the Kurdish question. Members of the faction of the Turkish state who supported a Democratic Solution were eliminated secretly as it was seen as well in the case of the Turkish president Turgut Ozal (1989–1993).

The PKK became stronger in the 1990s. It was one of the strongest revolutionary organizations left in the Middle East, and therefore has presented an obstacle not only for Turkey but also for the whole of NATO. In 1995, Rêber Apo wrote that if the PKK would be successful at liberating some territories of Kurdistan, the impact would be as big as the Russian Revolution not only for Kurdistan but for the whole Middle East and the world. The international conspiracy, which led to the abduction and imprisonment of Rêber Apo in 1999 did not succeed in liquidating the PKK.





The offensive of 1st June 2004, the PKK moved towards its new paradigm – namely Democratic Confederalism. The presentation of the KCK system in Rêber Apo's defence writings, the Rojava Revolution, and the Kurdish Freedom Movement's daily struggle against the second strongest NATO army of the Turkish state have given the global left new perspectives for the 21st century. It is obvious that capitalist forces aim to liquidate the Kurdish Freedom Movement. To analyze the current war situation in the Middle East, this must be considered ideologically. Rêber Apo argues that the Third World War – which has its center in the Middle East – finally no longer means a war between different states, but a war of states against society.

REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S WAR (ŞERÊ GELÊ ŞOREŞGERÎ), AND THE REALITY OF A FIGHTING PEOPLE (RASTIYA GELÊ ŞERKER)

As elaborated above, since 2010, the PKK has pursued the strategy of Revolutionary People's War, further developed from Mao's strategy of Long Lasting People's War. After the 1. June 2010 the strategy was out in practice and the Guerrilla was actively taking place in defense by making effective actions in the mountains against the army of the Turkish fascist state. This phase was the entering of the 4th strategic era of the PKK.

4 Levels of Revolutionary People's War

- Democratic Autonomous Administration of the People
- People's Defense Forces, like HPC (Hêzên Parastina Civakî)
- Professional Defense Forces, as the Guerrilla
- Strategical Alliances of the People



Everyone of the population aged 7–70 years old should participate in the war on different levels; hence, not everyone necessarily in a military sense. The whole life of the society, defense, administration, justice, health, economy, etc. must be organized according to war. Creating the Reality of a Fighting People (Rastiya Gelê Şerker) – a mentality of not leaving, but of staying and of defending what has been built up. Different segments of society participate in different ways according to their education and abilities; for example, professional military units at the front, while others work, for instance, for the war economy, logistics, making bread, food and distributing it and defending the cities and the revolution built up by, first and foremost, not leaving the cities. As many people as possible, ideally everyone, should receive military education and be able to defend themselves.

Rêber Apo mentioned many times to learn from the example of the Palestinian resistance in Gaza, where the Reality of a Fighting People (Rastiya Gelê Şerker) exists, and that people should be prepared to live under similar conditions. A few years ago, Hevals reported to Rêber Apo about all the big successes of the revolutionary works in Afrin, and about the reconstruction plans for Kobanê. Rêber Apo criticized the Hevals that the enemy can easily destroy these achievements and they must instead focus all efforts on the defense; for instance, preparing the defense of Afrin and rebuilding Kobanê not overground but underground in tunnels. Ideally, the society should prepare their cities for defense, setting up committees.

How to prepare the defense and organize society for war:

- **Committees for Tunnels, Logistics, Ammunition**
 - construct tunnels everywhere, every family builds a small defense construction, a covered trench against shelling, in their garden, putting sand bags, if a bomb hits a multi-story building, the lowest floors often withstand.



- Owners of such buildings prepare the basement with mattresses and fire extinguishers, having logistics and weapon and munition depots, building civil defense places like basements;
- **Curtain Committee**
 - collect textiles and sew big curtains to cover sight of streets for drones, curtains and (later) roofs to cover the city and collecting a lot of tires or barrels of oil that can produce loads of smoke so that the city cannot be attacked from above;
- **Tire Committee**
 - collect old tires to distribute them and light them up in case of an attack to create a black smoke to hinder the sight of drone;
- building up intelligence and observing the enemy's activity;
- giving education, starting with school children to break the fear of the population by educating them about the reality of the war, so that they know the enemy and its weapons;
- learning first aid;
- and hence, with all these actions creating a mentality that the city will be defended and not left; the more people are staying, the more people can defend it, and protect it from the arbitrary attacks of the enemy.

The goal is to build a Reality of a Fighting People (Rastiya Gelê Şerker), aiming at replacing the professional military forces with the communal societal militias (HPC/ HPC-Jin/ HPC-Ciwan). No one else than the people themselves can defend Rojava and keep the enemy out. The revolutionary neighborhood of Şex Meqsud in Aleppo resisted against jihadist Al-Nusra-Front and was completely encircled by them in the year 2012. In the beginning both sides did not have real weapons and fought each other with knives and axes. The population could not leave their surrounded neighborhood, and defended it. The Al-Nusra-Front constantly bombarded the neighborhood with their self-made 'Hell Cannons' and massacred many civilians. The city quarter of Şex Meqsud is a role model for Revolutionary People's War, where the whole population participated in the defense. It was the first example for urban warfare in the Kurdish Freedom Struggle.

Revolutionary People's War does not emphasize the role of the professional army but all the other societal works to contribute to self-defense.



SPECIAL WARFARE

In this century special warfare is a topic that is essential in the matter of self-defense. Especially in Rojava Special Warfare is used on order to break the resistance of the people and the Revolutionary People's War. For this examples can be given on behalf of the experience that was made here in Rojava in the last years about constant attacks and operations of the Turkish state on the revolution of Rojava and it's population.

Conservatives (such as ENKS, KDP that are working with the Turkish state), for example, spread counter-propaganda, calling people to leave the city and saying that Turkey confirms that people can return to their houses after the operations, but at the same time there is a systematic settling of jihadist forces and their families in the occupied areas with the support of the fascist Turkish state. Especially in the time of the operation of occupying Serêkaniyê and Girê Spî (2019) a huge panic was caused. This was especially seen by instance in TV broadcasting by special warfare channels and as tactics of the Turkish state to make the people flee. To push the civilians to flee and to create a chaotic situation is a tactic of the enemy. In such situations the best answer against these kinds of attacks is to maintain calmness, not spread panic through the people and always remember the importance of not leaving one's own land in war situations. The revolutionary structures have the responsibility to spread this consciousness among the society. The enemies aim to create feelings of constant threat, insecurity and lack of future perspective, creating economic problems for people, and making people leave; all of which are forms of special warfare.

An essential method to convince the people to stay is to educate society on how to defend themselves. To convince the population to stay, and to be well-prepared for defense is something that is dialectic and creates belief in the people. Only if both aspects are developed, the defense of the revolution will be successful.

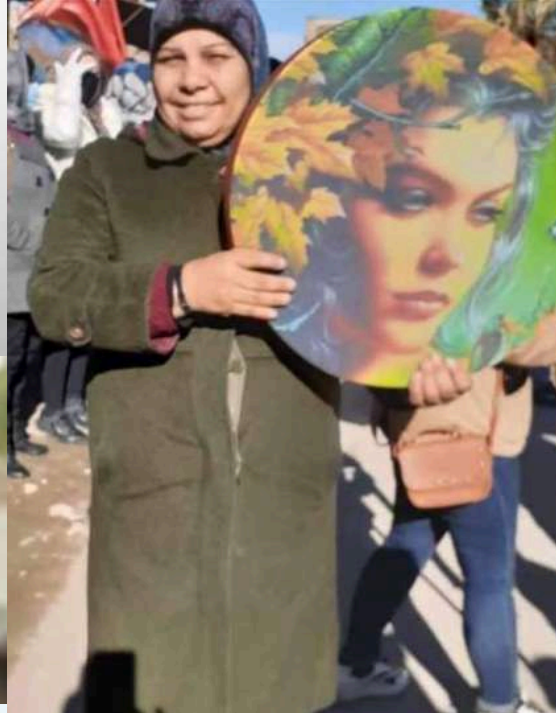


With the education of the society, societal militias like HPC/ HPC-Jin/ HPC-Ciwan can be built up in order to counteract centralist, state tendencies of professional armies. The way how the defense is organized reflects the ideology of the system we want to build. Revolutionary People's War does not emphasize the role of a professional army but all the other societal works to contribute to self-defense. The more the population participates in the councils and takes its life into its own hands, the more people become convinced to stay and defend the revolution, defending what has been built up by themselves.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CIVILIAN HPC/ HPC-JIN/ HPC-CIWAN FORCES IN ROJAVA

HPC/ HPC-Jin/ HPC-Ciwan are civilian forces that are not part of the SDF (the Syrian Democratic Forces, which is the umbrella organization for all military forces – of which YPG and YPJ are a part of – of North-East Syria). For the defense of the revolution it is crucial that the defense is coming from the people themselves. People who are organized within the HPC structures are building a Reality of a Fighting People by organizing to defend themselves and their communities, and are aiming to educate the whole of society in matters of defense and protection. They are completely voluntarily and do not receive payment.

In the following part we will share an interview with the HPC-Jin (Hêzen Parastina Cewherî-Jin), the women's self-defense forces of the communities, during a training program in a small town in Rojava. One of the interviewees was Şehîd Hediya Ahmed Abdullah, she was 42 years old and has been active in the movement since she was 14 years old. She has six children, one of her sons and her husband are with the communal security forces, Asayîş, one son is with the YPG. One of her daughters is a member of the Council of Families of the Şehîds. Hediya has been organized since the beginning of the revolution. On 19th November 2022 she fell Şehîd with 11 other comrades in an air strike made by the Turkish state on Taqil Baqil, a countryside of Dêrik.



ŞEHÎD HEDIYA AHMED ABDULLAH TELLS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNAL WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENSE FORCES:⁶

The HPC-Jin were built in 2014; until then, this work was done mainly by men. We have seen that this is not enough, women should also be involved in this work. There were often too few forces at the checkpoints, because there were many wounded by the war. Therefore, the proposal was made to build up the HPC-Jin. Right at the beginning 47 women participated. At the end of 2015 the founding conference was held, a leadership was elected and a flag was designed. Our organization is now completely autonomous, we have our own structure, ammunition and logistics. We are the defense structure of the communes.

In the beginning, the men laughed

At first the men had no faith in us. They said, these older women, mothers, what can they do, they are afraid of themselves. But in the fight for Hol, the HPCs were asked for support. 45 women proposed to participate themselves. Twelve women were sent. We immediately said that we wanted to organize ourselves autonomously, otherwise



the men would later claim that they had done all the work. Also, for the liberation operation in Şaddadî many have proposed themselves, the population trusts us. We are very proud that we were there at the front, we took care of logistics and supply of ammunition and cooked at the front.

Against agents, drug dealers and forced prostitution

We give military lessons, keep watch at the checkpoints and are responsible for security at celebrations, demonstrations, commemorations of Şehîds and funerals. We are also responsible for security in the communes, for example when agents or drug dealers are active there or when women are exploited and, for example, are forced into prostitution. Sometimes our members report to us when something happens in the villages or communities – be it theft, violence against women or children. In this case, we first talk to the people involved and try to solve the problems in a self-organized way. In my neighborhood, for example, there was an Alevi woman whose husband had forbidden her to leave the house. I talked to him for a long time and he then realized that he was wrong. At night, we do patrols in the city, not only in our own districts. We have a strong link to the security forces of Asayîş.

Organized self-defense

In the HPC Jin, there are girls and women from seven to seventy. For example, children do sports, or learn to protect themselves against dangers from the internet. All of them are trained in their institutions, such as in the city administration, or in the field of art and culture. The members form teams and units, so they are organized in military structures that can be deployed at any time. A team consists of four people, a unit consists of ten. We know who has been trained where, and if an attack comes, they are ready.

We, as the people in charge, are on the ground here in the center. All our members are volunteers, which means that we do not receive a salary. That is why there is a lot of appreciation for us. Not everyone comes to the center here, for some it would be a big step to go out with our vest and gun, but they are active members and organized in the communities.

Women have a strong will

We are ready to go to the front; women have a strong will and no fear of death. The HPC organizes the defense of society. They build positions in their places and defend them. They prepare tunnels against air raids. They are responsible for keeping the city administration functioning in case of war, possibly in an air-raid shelter. You must also be prepared in the medical field. [...]

Here, a revolution is taking place within the revolution. On one hand, we are fighting for our identity as Kurds against the enemy who wants to destroy us, on the other hand, we are fighting a battle within the society itself. We are attacked on all levels. We also have to fight on many fronts at the same time, against the attacks from outside and inside, we have to satisfy the most basic needs so that the population does not run away. [...]

When the war comes, we will be on the side of the YPJ and YPG, as well as Asayîş. We are preparing ourselves. Rêber Apo has shown in the letters from Imrali that we have to organize ourselves as a society that will continue to function in war.

Defense does not only mean to be ready militarily, but also on a mental level. On one hand you prepare for air attacks. But you also have to know how to prepare against hunger, we pass on knowledge about how to prepare for emergency situations. How women can defend themselves against male violence. Defense is very broad. We must be prepared to defend the rights of women and girls in our own home, for example against the marriage of girls at the age of 14 or 15.'

THE STAGES OF REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S WAR

Like Mao's strategy of Long Lasting People's War, Revolutionary People's War within the Kurdish Freedom Movement consists of three stages and is not limited to Kurdistan.

1. Passive Defense (2014–2015 in Bakur; 2012–present in Rojhilat):

Ceasefire with the state and stage of negotiations. The Guerrilla only counters the state's attacks in small responses of self-defense without starting bigger counter-offensives. The main driving force during this stage is not the military guerrilla but the social and political movement. Representatives of the movement stood in elections and were elected.

2. Active Defense: To pressure the state, more militant/military/guerrilla actions are conducted. The aim is to put the enemy under pressure, for instance, in negotiations, opening space and fostering the revolutionary movement. Still the social movement plays a more active role than the armed guerrilla. The IRA applied this strategy, when they were stuck in negotiations with Britain.

3. Total Resistance/fully developed Revolutionary People's War:

The aim in the final stage is to establish Democratic Confederation. Since the state usually does not accept this, a full war replaces symbolic actions. If a state accepts this in negotiations, no war would be necessary. The revolutionary side fights with full force militarily to liberate as much of the territory as possible. When this is not possible, attacks, limiting the movement of the enemy should be conducted.

Different parts of the territory, such as the different parts of Kurdistan, can be in different stages at the same time; hence, the stages should not be understood in a linear war. In all stages, we need to prepare ourselves until the final stage and for a full offensive of the enemy.

Like By building our own structures and taking more and more aspects of life out of the hands of the state (e.g. building up communes, co-operatives, resolving conflicts in the communities ourselves), the influence of the state becomes weaker. This means that we cannot directly go into a full confrontation with the enemy, while we are still need to strengthen our organization, but need to build our own strength step by step in society by building up these structures. Different states tolerate this kind of building up to different extents, until they react with repression. When states lose their influence, they change to the stage of fascism. Until 2014, the PKK had almost liberated Bakur and taken over most state functions apart from the police and could agitate almost openly, so the Turkish state attacked the movement with full force in 2015.

Forces of Revolutionary People's War in Bakur (North Kurdistan) and Turkey

Especially since the heavy attacks of the Turkish state against the PKK in 2015, the following four forces are crucial for the Revolutionary People's War in Bakur and other parts of Turkey:

- **Rural guerrilla HPG/ YJA-Star:** They are mainly present in the rural mountainous areas; first only in Bakur and nowadays – apart from other parts of Kurdistan – also in other parts of Turkey. The attacks target the Turkish army and state.
- **Urban guerrilla YPS/ YPS-Jin:** They consist mainly of civilians and are a local defense force in the urban areas in the plains away from the mountains. They are not under a central command but organized de-centrally in small local cells. Before starting an offensive to liberate cities and villages in the plains, local cells of the urban guerrilla are built up. The cells independently conduct attacks against the Turkish state.



- **System of an organized society and the movement of the uprising:** The aim is to conduct small attacks against the enemy, e.g. attacking collaborators, or agents; burning cars, or attacking the enemy's economy like hotels and factories with simple tools and weapons to inspire others to conduct similar actions to spark a bigger uprising. Such an insurgent tactic particularly in the metropolises of Turkey puts the enemy under pressure and breaks the silence, bringing attention to the struggle.
- **Struggle in the metropolises and the strategic alliance in a common front under the name of HBDH/ KBDH:** The strategic allies are the Turkish socialist/ communist forces. The role model are united leftist front organizations against fascism. HBDH/ KBDH plays the same role in Turkey as the SDF does in North-East Syria.



LIKE REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S WAR IS THE STRATEGY OF THE SOLUTION OF THE PEOPLE!

The 'Arab Spring' in the Middle East, which is called the 'Spring of the People' by Rêber Apo, started in 2011, was an uprising of the democratic people, the youth, women and working class. The people stood up against the regimes but also against the politics of domination and imperialism of the previous one and a half century. The uprisings happened spontaneously without a vanguard. The imperialist forces saw the strength of the peoples uprisings and started to support Islamist forces to push revolutionary forces back. Under this influence, soon the 'Spring of the People' movement changed its course to Islamist nationalism in most places and turned into bloodshed. The PKK took also part in the uprisings of 2011. Due to the strong roots in the society of Rojava, the revolutionary movement could build up the Rojava Revolution in 2012. The revolution changed the power balance between the PKK and the Turkish state. The Turkish state started to support jihadists and motivated them to fight in Rojava, such as today the so-called SNA ("Syrian National Army"). It is also the Turkish state that is supported by the USA and NATO.

The Rojava Revolution is the only true remain of the 'Spring of the People'. In 2012, Turkey arrested 7,000 people related to the KCK system, in the so-called KCK-trials. In 2013, the 'Spring of the People' arrived to Turkey with the Taksim square protests. In 2014, the HDP won elections with up to 98% of the votes in some areas and took over municipalities.

In 2014, Daesh (ISIS) invaded Şengal and committed a massacre on the Ezidi population with the plan to march further to take over Rojava. But the revolutionary forces of Rojava opened a humanitarian corridor to save the Ezidis, and defended Rojava. The Turkish state's plan was to later take over control in Rojava from Daesh and have called to build a 'Safety Zone' since 2013. During the battle of Kobanê, uprisings in all

Bakur occurred and the Turkish state's police lost control. Three neighborhoods in the city of Cizire in Bakur next to the border with Rojava were liberated.

In 2015, the Turkish state started a new stage of war against the movement and put Rêber Apo in total isolation in Imraflî prison. In the same year, revolutionary forces liberated Girê Spî and the Turkish state called for an emergency NATO meeting. The fascist Turkish state started with their targets and plans of bringing the PKK to its knees in 2015, murdered many Kurds and arrested elected representatives, with the aim of breaking the resisting spirit of the movement. In the city of Suruç in Bakur close to Kobanê, a Daesh suicide bomber committed a massacre in July 2015 and Turkey blocked access for injured comrades to hospitals. Turkey used the attack to spread propaganda about a terrorist threat, conducted mass arrests of several thousand revolutionaries within a few days and flew regular airstrikes in Başûr. The revolutionary spirit in Bakur was very strong and many believed in the liberation of Bakur. In August 2015, also in response, the city councils of several cities of Bakur declared democratic autonomy and people built barricades in the streets. The population started this resistance. People liberated neighborhoods and the police could only pass through the main market streets with armored vehicles, but not the small streets anymore due to barricades. During the day, the police was quiet, and they only attacked the barricades at night. The youth was the main force of the urban resistance. In the beginning, only the Turkish police but not the army attacked the resistance. In October 2015, the councils of the movement declared a unilateral ceasefire. In November the Turkish state sent its army with heavy weapons to crush the resistance. This full war in Bakur went rather unnoticed by international media. In February 2016, the Turkish state violently retook control of Cizire. People, especially injured ones, sought refuge in underground constructions in Cizire. The Turkish state put petrol into the underground constructions and burnt more than 200 people alive. In May 2016 the Turkish state attempted to exterminate

the resistance of the self-administration in Bakur and made heavy air strikes attacking the city of Nuseybin.

Only a few Guerrilla units could move from the mountains to the cities to support the resistance. Thus, the role of the guerrilla in the urban struggle was limited, the resistance of the self-administration in Bakur was important and had a huge impact. Before, the Turkish state had its invasion plan for Rojava ready, its army was stationed on the border to Rojava and only waited for the NATO's approval to invade Rojava. But, due to the resistance in the cities of Bakur, the Turkish state had to withdraw the army from its border to Rojava's to attack the city resistance in Bakur. Hence, the resistance in Bakur gave Rojava and Başûr two more years to prepare and to build up defenses against the Turkish invasion. The developments in Bakur cannot be understood isolated but only in light of the whole Kurdistan. In general, the movement was strengthened.



The SDF started to liberate Manbij in Rojava in mid-2016 instead of Raqqa, as planned by the USA. Erdogan used the defeated military coup in Turkey in July 2016 to intensify the state of emergency and the repression. In 2018, the Turkish state occupied Afrin in Rojava and mountain areas in Başûr (North Iraq). The Turkish army suffered severe losses in their invasion of the Medya Defense Zone in Başûr.

In 2019 on the 24. September Erdogan presented the Turkish state's plans for a 30 km safety zone along the border to Syria in the General Assembly of the UN with the argument of effectively fighting terrorist organizations such as ISIS and therefore prevent the increase of people taking refuge in western states. On the 09. October 2019 Serekaniye and Girê Spi were occupied by the Turkish state using the SNA Jihadists and with the legitimization of creating a 'Security Zone'. This was a continuation of the warfare in the previous areas like Cerablus, Azas and Al Bab (2016) and Afrin.

Following this the Turkish state attempted to occupy the area of Heftanin in the Medya Defense Zone and faced a huge resistance by the Guerrilla. In 2021 the Turkish state started another military operation in Garê (mountain area near to the city of Duhok in South Kurdistan) but capitulated against the Guerrilla in short time and withdrew. The Turkish state did not accept their capitulations against the Guerrilla and started to attack Rojava in winter, starting operations targeting civil infrastructure. In April 2022 a new operation was started in Avaşîn as another attempt to enter the Medya Defense Zones and to occupy the area.

While the Turkish state's fascist army was facing difficulties in the mountains and could not proceed, in September 2022 with the martyrdom of Jina Amini the people in Iran and Rojhilat (East Kurdistan) would shout for freedom with the expression of Jin Jiyan Azadi. The Jin Jiyan Azadi uprisings spread around the whole world. With this spirit everywhere in the world the people and especially women would gain more strength.

Again Rojava became a target in the winter as a counterattack to stop the impact of the resistance. Water and electricity facilities became a target making an impact on the civil infrastructure in Rojava and destroying the populations most important facilities of supply. These attacks were continued as the Turkish state again started their

operations in April 2023 especially in the Zap region. Because of the strong actions and the historical resistance of the Guerrilla the Turkish state's army had to draw back and this led to a repetition of the attacks on Rojava. In Winter 2023/24 in Rojava depots of wheat, civil infrastructure facilities for water and electricity, petrol stations and hospitals became a target and many civilians were martyred as result of the lack of infrastructural supply or because of the drone strikes.

In this winter especially a clearness inside society came up about not leaving the land but resisting. Inside society a better understanding of the truth of Turkish fascism and warfare, the real face of the enemy and its hostility towards the people was becoming clearer and a strong stance against this arose. Following a winter of attacks in Kurdistan the people were gaining more confidence and everywhere in Kurdistan and especially in Bakur the people would fight and rise up against all forms of oppression. Again in April 2024 after a phase of uprisings especially with the 8th March and Newroz, the Medya Defense Zone became a target and as the Turkish state was facing huge losses in their warfare against the Guerrilla, again in winter 2024 Rojava became a center of the warfare and of the imperialist plans of the Turkish fascist state. This time with a new plan of occupation and during the phase of reaching the peak of the 3rd World War which center takes place in the Middle East. By using mercenaries and jihadists forces like the SNA the Turkish state wants to complete its targets to occupy the area and to complete their Neo-Ottoman plans for the Missak-I Milli National Pact of the Ottoman Empire. What the Turkish state and all other hegemonic forces like Israel, USA, GB and the NATO want is to occupy the land and redesign the area but what they will face is a total resistance.

Here in Rojava the society is ready and has taken a lot of experience from the years of struggle and practice in Revolutionary People's War. The society will fight together with their defense forces. But it is as well the responsibility of all the people around the world to take action in this phase and to take part in the resistance the way they can, to organize, and to join this resistance here in Rojava. The revolution of Rojava is not just the revolution of the people of the Middle East but the hope for a free world for all the societies of the world. With the strategy of Revolutionary People's War here in Rojava a fight against a system is waged that is the enemy of all humanity. The historical phase that we are in right now concerns all the people. To defend Rojava means to fight against the Tyranny of the hegemonic forces in all places of the world. This is seen very clear in this phase. Revolutionary People's War will be the answer of the people and the strategy to find a solution to the crisis of the 3rd Wold War.



END

Footnotes

1 - <https://kck-info.com/interviews251224/>

2 - Literally 'Defense of a people'. The English official book version is titled 'Beyond State, Power, and Violence'. The German version was published in 2010, and is titled: 'Jenseits von Staat, Macht und Gewalt' as first translation in western languages.

3 - The role of Sumer and of ziggurats is extensively discussed in Abdullah Öcalan's defence writings and in the 'Manifesto for Democratic Civilisation'. Here are two excerpts. Starting with an excerpt from the book *The Roots of Civilization. Prison Writings I*, and continuing below with an excerpt from the book *Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization Volume I: Civilization. The Age of Masked Gods and Disguised Kings*:

"[...] Thus the dimension of servitude is introduced into human relations, and with it the notion of property. The way this actually happened in Sumerian society was through the establishment of units that served as cultic locations, sites for the coordination of collective labor, and centers of social governance. These temples, or ziggurats, were apparently conceived as earthly representations of the celestial order, i.e. as representing social identity. They are now often regarded as the prototype of all later temples, parliaments, trade centers, military headquarters and centers of learning and the arts. We may thus say that the Mesopotamian ziggurat was the womb of state institutions. [...]" [Öcalan, *The Roots of Civilisation. Prison Writings I*, p. 6].

"[...] As argued in *The Roots of Civilization*, the Ziggurat functioned—to a greater or lesser degree—as a model for later civilizations. This initial model led to an urban society that now exceeds millions of people. It is in fact the womb of all state-like organizations. Ziggurats, at the time,

Footnotes

were not only the center of the city but the city itself. Today's cities too are divided into three main parts: the temple (the house of the god) where legitimacy is derived, a larger section for urban administration and the largest section—dwellings for the workers. [...]” [Öcalan, Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization Volume I: Civilization. The Age of Masked Gods and Disguised Kings, pp.97–98].

4 - See, for instance, Guerilla Warfare, or Guerilla Warfare: A method (the latter is available here: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1963/09/guerrilla-warfare.htm>).

5 - “In decolonization, there is therefore the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation. If we wish to describe it precisely, we might find it in the well-known words: “The last shall be first and the first last.” Decolonization is the putting into practice of this sentence. That is why, if we try to describe it, all decolonization is successful.

The naked truth of decolonization evokes for us the searing bullets and bloodstained knives which emanate from it. For if the last shall be first, this will only come to pass after a murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists. That affirmed intention to place the last at the head of things, and to make them climb at a pace (too quickly, some say) the well-known steps which characterize an organized society, can only triumph if we use all means to turn the scale, including, of course, that of violence.” (Fanon, ‘The Wretched of the Earth’, p. 37).

6 - The full text can be found here: <http://gemeinsamkaempfen.blogspot.de/?p=911>





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