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A response to the article "Rojava: An anarcho-syndicalist perspective"

Hüseyin Civan

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The effects of social revolutions are not limited by the effect of struggle against political and economical powers in the geographical region where the revolution happens. It's important to see their effect on other different regions along with the intellectual and practical changes this effect brings. Being talked about with Kobanê Resistance, Rojava Revolution gets more important now to see this effect more clearly.

The reaction and attack of the state and capitalism against what's happening in Rojava, is expected at this point. However, we need to turn our face to the internal debates in social opposition at the same time. It's necessary to emphasize that such debates are an important resort for understanding what the effect of Rojava is.

Since the start of this process, anarchist comrades' behaviors towards understanding Rojava and taking up with the resistance has been quite important for remembering the international solidarity, which we aren't familiar to see in such an organized manner. Again we have experienced that solidarity is our greatest weapon.

This manner of solidarity that was created between anarchists inevitably made the resistance in Kobanê a headline especially among anarchists all around the world.

The paper "Rojava: An anarcho-syndicalist point of view" which was published on several different sites is one of the reflections of this headline. This evaluation of the paper especially aims to correct information about Rojava Revolution and Kobanê Resistance, instead of pointing out positive and negative sides of the paper and making a simple criticism.

Considering different comments may form with the different perspectives of anarchist organizations in different geographical regions; I focused the criticism of paper on the matter of incomplete evaluation of Kurdish freedom struggle and Rojava Revolution. Political criticism against a community which is in a life or death struggle under war conditions can't be made ignoring this condition. Even so if said criticism has certain prejudices and was formed with sharp generalization. And of course, if a huge people's movement is evaluated with a degrading manner...

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First of all it's necessary to state that forming a solidarity relationship with Rojava Revolution and Kobanê Resistance is not an emotional relation, unlike comrades with an "anarcho-syndicalist perspective" emphasize. Because anarchist organizations don't base their solidarity relationships on "sympathy". These relationships mostly form considering a political perspective and strategies planned to realize this perspective. Thereby, solidarity and taking up with a struggle aren't far from objectivity.

In different parts of the paper, PKK criticism is tried to be based on party's political history - and with criticism such as shortcoming implementation of "libertarian municipality", incomplete state of political transformation and having nationalistic roots; current condition and perspective of Kurdish Movement is being left under prejudice. While doing all these, prejudice is being based on incomplete information, consciously or unconsciously.

We are not fortunetellers, we can't possibly know what will happen in Rojava a month or a year from now. We can't know that this social transformation which not only gives us hope as revolutionaries that struggle in a geographically close region, but also feeds our struggle in the regions that we struggle in, would move towards a positive or negative future. But we are revolutionary anarchists. We can't just sit aside, watch what's happening and comment; we take part in social struggles and take action for an anarchist revolution.

Long live the Rojava Revolution!

Long live the Kobanê Resistance!

Long live the Revolutionary Anarchism!

Hüseyin Civan (from DAF)

No one claims Kurdish Freedom Movement is an anarchist movement. Thereby, the practices which are claimed to be short-coming or flawed should be evaluated considering this fact. On the other hand, a people's movement that value "criticism of the state and the capitalism" so much can't be overlooked by anarchists. This matter can't only be tied to Bookchinist "libertarian municipalism". Movement has referenced many different comrades from Bakunin to Kropotkin on its theoretical relations with anarchism, and could interpret the state problem with a wide perspective. On the other hand, realizing this idea led to a practice which is quite libertarian and non-central. I think this part is very important. This information is based not on quotations from articles and books, but on mutual observation of political organizations that share common ground for struggle.

The condition of Rojava is not as such because of Assad leaving the region or his claimed agreements with global powers. Great social transformation that happened in Rojava two and a half years ago, happened in a conjuncture where political activity forced Middle-East to choose governance of one of two opposing sides (coup-supporting seculars - conservative democrats). Rojava, when "springs" turned into winter in Middle-East region, is people not fitting into these two sides and creating their own solution.

While life is being re-built in Rojava, the non-central structure of social mechanisms being created, insistent emphasis on statelessness, organization of the production-consumption-distribution relations in a way as far from capitalism as possible, self-organization being the warrantor of social process, communes in three different cantons shaping the operation of communes with independent decision processes are undeniably important in this age. Especially, how could an anarchist deny the fact that this process is a promising experience for multiplying with similar examples in different geographical regions?

Let's repeat for comrades that insist on not comprehending. This is not an effort to claim it is an anarchist process. However, the

anarchist characteristics of the process in Rojava would make anarchists who struggle for a social revolution happy. This happiness is far from the romanticism that's criticized in the paper, it's about understanding that our political goals and strategies are applicable in such a system, in such an age.

No one can claim that practices of stateless people are negative for anarchists who struggle for a social revolution. Such practices in different geographical regions may develop under their genuine conditions. Claiming these genuine struggles are not adequate with anarchist principles and reducing their importance is exhibiting an understanding of anarchism that rely on theoretical arrogance lacking practice. Another thing in the paper that's worth pointing at is the authenticity of references. It's interesting to reference the expressions of an online group just because they have Kurdistan and anarchist in their name. It's not about the expressions of comrades being right or wrong. It's a problematic question that what political fact the group bases their expressions on, not showing any political activity in Kurdistan region while theoretically criticizing the Kurdish Freedom Movement on a practical level.

While the women's movement in Kurdistan is directly related with the freedom movement, comments that claim the women's movement is apart from this integrity or even against it, are twisting of information. It's a logical flaw to criticize movement as patriarchic while emphasizing on the importance of women's movement in the struggle. Moreover, the logical flaw continues when the claim of Ocalan being a rapist is confirmed through quotes from state's anti-propaganda websites. Another example of references is about "Kurds wanting war to expel Arabs". When you cherry pick a speech disregarding its context, you can use it to support any context of your own. It's clear that the topic of the referred news is about settlers moved by Assad to change the demographic structure of region towards his assimilative goals. Just like Israeli settlers.

Causes can be invented when one tries to be over suspicious. However, it's important to question the relation of these causes with actual facts. It's a mistake to try to define Kurdish Freedom Movement as a nationalist movement. This definition and the likes overlook the transformation of the movement and claim that it continues its old political structure. A perspective that has no knowledge of the practices of process, and has only criticizing articles as a source of information, is extremely problematic. Because a massive part of these critics are worded by statist mindset and its extensions. A healthy criticism can be made by observing and experiencing the political practices. Every criticism that lacks a vision of geographical region and practicality, carry the danger of falling into orientalism.

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We spoke before about the process in Rojava and the movement not being anarchist. Another lacking thing is evaluation of Kurdish people's freedom struggle apart from the historical fact that they have been struggling for centuries in Mesopotamian region. Those who draw away from the truth for ideological correctness and devaluate people's centuries long struggle, are betraying their revolutionary responsibilities and should pay attention to whose front they are placing themselves at.

To perceive the classes in a shallow vision and trying to interpret social struggles just with economical struggles is to create a hierarchy between the struggles of the oppressed. An anarchist point of view that limits the oppressed to workers and disregards other relations of power contradicts the history of anarchist movement. Revolutionary history of anarchism is full of economical, political and social struggles of the oppressed. To overlook the effect of movement on people's freedom movements from Europe to Far East Asia in different centuries, to exclude the practical feeding of this effect to class struggles in South America, is to ignore the integrated structure of anarchist movement.