

Reply to Anarkismo & DAF on Rojava

K.B.

November 2014

To call my critique of the PKK an attack on the Rojava Revolution is misleading. My article tried to emphasize support for what I saw as “organizing from below” by the Tev Dem and the women’s factions of the PKK. I appreciate the Anarkismo editorial group and the DAF replies to my perspectives shared on Rojava from my “anarcho-syndicalist” view, for the spirit they wish to hold debate on developments there.

Like the Anarkismo editorial group I believe in sharing honest critique but not liquidation of anarchist political positions. My article did not say we can only show support if an organization is adequately anarchist or internationalist enough, like some purists do. While Anarkismo and DAF comrades say “No one claims Kurdish Freedom Movement is an anarchist movement” many Western anarchists have not been so clear, comparing the entire situation to being a second coming of Spain 1936, just because Bookchin used to be a green anarchist who rejected class struggle for libertarian municipalism. I think recognizing this shows that we are sensible about developments on the ground compared to the uncritical cheerleading of anarcho-liberals and other leftist activists.

First I would like to make some things clear. I support nationally oppressed people’s fight against national oppression. What I do not support is national liberation movements, fronts, parties but the historically existing class fronts within such struggles that anarchists have supported, like workers and popular resistance in their organizations from below. Based on the reports from the KAF of the “directly democratic” Tev Dem and awareness campaign of the “anti-statist” Kurdish women’s organizations (that are autonomous relatively within the rest of the PKK) I saw these manifestations as worthy of highlighting as a hope for the region:

“If these developments are true the Tev-Dem was quite the achievement.”

“As Dilar Dirik an activist close to YJA Star describes in her talk on forming a “Stateless State” as seen in a widely circulated video, the Kurdish women’s movement through the experience of patriarchy in the Kurdish national liberation movement and Kurdish society at large has come to the conclusion that forming a new nation state should no longer be part of the Kurdish liberation project, as the nation state is an inherently patriarchal institution.”

I made clear that it is not critique but our duty as anarcho-syndicalists to not liquidate our politics along with our solidarity and share our perspectives in whatever ways we can. I chose to highlight these organizations like the Tev-Dem and women's groups/militias as real manifestations on the ground that seemed to be formed on a class basis as well as being non-statist and anti-patriarchal as compared to the mainstream of the PKK.

In regards the PKK and its mainstream I would like to clear up a few things as put forward by my critics. I will admit humbly that I did not do enough research into the allegations of assault, and a comrade from Turkey pointed out to me that if these admissions are from Öcalan and not just anti-Kurdish propaganda they are in regards intra-party romantic relationships that were banned in the party's Marxist-Leninist phase. However I maintain if this is Öcalan speaking he still comes off with loads of machismo in regards his relations with women, and it is not disconnected from reality to point out that the PKK was historically a very patriarchal organization, otherwise why are there autonomously organizing women's factions within it?

“We agree with “K.B.” that it is precisely in the self-activity of the grassroots masses and women of the PKK and allied structures that the most promising prospects for struggle in the direction of complete liberation lie.” - Anarkismo editorial group

If this is what the Anarkismo editorial group believes then I hardly see why they should try to say I support some abstract pure groupings that don't exist. My article highlighted what I saw as the grassroots masses (Tev-Dem) and the autonomous women's structures within the PKK. What I do reject from an anarcho-syndicalist standpoint is the leftover nationalism of hierarchical political parties, especially when there is the chance for grassroots popular and anti-national anti-patriarchal resistance from below in such national struggles. I believe as anarchists there are class lines we do not cross, and critical support for nationalist parties is crossing them.

“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.” -Hüseyin Civan, DAF

I think this is a great point put forward by our DAF comrade. I disagree with them on my article seeing the Rojava situation only through the lines of the economic. I mostly made a political analysis, since reports are few on the economic makeup and class composition of society there. I did however think that the Tev Dem seemed more connected at least in origin to a real movement of daily working/popular class life (though now there are reports that Tev-Dem has been transformed more into local municipal government of the social democratic administration.) I also saw the social and cultural situation of Kurdish women leading them to favorable non-statist positions. This reminder is an important one to take heed of in the light of left-wing Marxists who tend to bend the stick too far in favor of class reductionist approaches. However it is very much apparent that the nationalist and social democratic program as it is developing is in no way favorable to libertarian communist outcomes, its economic program being cooperativist and seeking a space to integrate relatively autonomously within capitalism, instead of smashing it.

Going forward I hope comrades from Anarkismo and DAF can see my writings as informed by this reply, and can refrain from strawman arguments and friendly fire assertions that my perspective was an “ultra-left” position statement on these issues.

Long live the struggle of the toiling masses and free women!

With the oppressed against the oppressors, always!

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