

Rojava between genocide and compromise

Zaher Baher

October 16, 2019

Rojava is going through a very difficult time; its future is not clear at the moment. However what is clear is that there will either be genocide or compromise.

What is currently going on in Rojava has been caused by the very complicated background to its struggle going back to the defence of Kobane by the heroic fighters of the YPG/J, and then the intervention of the United States (US).

I always believed that the US became involved in Rojava because they knew that Kobane could not be defeated and there was no other way to defeat Rojava's experiment other than by getting involved and controlling the situation in order to achieve its goal and strategy.

The absence of strong international support and solidarity from leftists, unionists, communists, socialists and anarchists, as well as the absence of uprisings in neighbouring countries in the region, has led to the present situation in Rojava.

In my opinion the US planned deliberately and meticulously to get involved in Rojava to meet its aims. This was done with the help of Turkey, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and probably the Kurdistan Regional Government, the KRG. For the US and its allies, it should not have been a successful experiment in such a place in a troubled region, very rich with oil and gas reserves. The experiment in Rojava tried to build democratic confederalism, based on democratic self-administration, gender equality, social ecology, and harmonious living, making religion a personal rather than a political issue, as it should be. This was impossible for the US and its allies to accept.

The conspiracy against Rojava started from there. The plan was not easy, but the US knew the steps that were necessary to carry this out. The first step was for the US to get closer to the Democratic Union Party, the PYD, not because it was very powerful, but because they were a very disciplined and well trained force, like the YPG/J. Later on, these forces formed a bigger body under the name of the Syrian Democratic Forces, the SDF. The US knew how to get these voluntary forces, built to defend their community, to change to an offensive force to serve US purposes. This could only happen with the cooperation of the PYD, so this was the second step for the US. Later we saw how the US and PYD managed to use the SDF wherever they wanted, changing them from a defensive force to an offensive one. The YPG/J developed with the SDF and grew from 7,000 fighters, to over 70,000. Maintaining a sizeable force like the SDF required food, clothing and other essentials plus whatever was required to fight ISIS. Now the third step was completed. In the end, the SDF became completely dependent on the US when fighting ISIS. In addition to this, the intention of the PYD and their main strategy focused on fighting ISIS, rather

than rebuilding Rojava economically, culturally, educationally and socially. The US alliance with the Kurdish in Rojava infuriated President Erdogan and his administration. The close relationship of the PYD with the US isolated Kurds and its forces from Russia. At the same time, Rojava received less international support and solidarity. So now the plan was completed and the US had almost achieved what it wanted.

All of this shifted the process of Rojava's movement towards the interests of the US rather than in the interests of Rojava itself. In the meantime, the PYD was unaware, or simply ignored the reality, that their survival was closely connected to the survival of ISIS. Once ISIS had been completely dealt with, then Rojava would not be able to survive, especially when there was not enough international solidarity or uprisings happening in neighbouring countries.

While the PYD became increasingly powerful, the self-ruling administration, the Democratic Movement of Society (the Tev-Dem) became weak and lost their balance and power. As a result, the PYD, a powerful, hierarchical organisation, failed to consult the people of Rojava when making important decisions. Although the PYD was powerful, its unconditional alliance with the US collapsed last week and Rojava came under brutal attack by the Turkish state.

The above reasons were crucial in placing Rojava in its current situation. However, the main reason was an internal one; the incorrect policies of the PYD. When I look at people's experiences in the region in general and the Kurdish people in particular, I see that a nation will fail if it is commanded by a political party.

Rojava is now facing either genocide by the Turkish state or compromise with the Assad regime. While none of the countries involved helped Rojava and with the war still ongoing, Rojava must look for a solution. If the US and other countries cannot stop Turkey right now, it will be too late and will lead to a disaster. In that scenario, Rojava is faced with two choices; genocide or compromise. In my opinion, choosing compromise with Assad's regime to save lives and the prevention of more destruction in Rojava is a logical choice. The PYD's compromise with the Syrian regime through Russia will change the direction of the war. We should also expect that while the PYD is negotiating with Assad from a weakened position, it cannot get what it wants and any talk of building democratic confederalism and an ecological society built on cooperatives and communes remains a dream.

Having said that, the current tactic is still better as it may prevent war between Turkey and Syria, because the US, Russia and others do not want the war to continue. If it does, there may be strikes, demonstrations and protests in Turkey and this could lead to the end of Erdogan's power.

Alas, in 1974¹, the Kurdish Democratic Party, the KDP, did not use the same tactic of compromise with the Iraqi regime in order to prevent the renewal of war between the KDP and Iraqi regime, causing hundreds of thousands of deaths. It would also have been wonderful if the Kurdistan Patriotic Union, the PUK, had not restarted the military struggle against the regime in

¹ The Kurdish movement started on 11/09/1961. There was a peaceful period between 1970 and 1974 after negotiations between the KDP and the regime at the time. But, in March 1974, after the dispute between KDP and the regime over the city of Kirkuk, the KDP went back to the mountains to fight the regime. This movement was supported by the former Iranian Regime. Once the Iranian regime made a pact with the Iraqi regime on 06/03/1975, it cut off all support for the KDP so that the Kurdish movement collapsed within 24 hours.

1976. That struggle caused so many deaths following the Anfal operation² against the Kurdish in Iraq and the launching of chemical weapons on the town of Halabja by the regime. So, saving the nation is far more important and entirely logical rather than saving the party, its dignity and its interests.

² Operation Anfal, or simply Anfal, was a genocidal campaign against the Kurdish people in northern Iraq, led by the Ba'athist Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein and headed by Ali Hassan al-Majid, in the final stage of the Iran-Iraq war. The campaign happened in 1988 and led to the disappearance of 180 thousand people.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Zaher Baher
Rojava between genocide and compromise
October 16, 2019

<https://libcom.org/library/rojava-between-genocide-compromise>

theanarchistlibrary.org