

**“We need a revolutionary movement able to  
overcome all kind of oppression”**

**Interview with the Internationalist Commune of Rojava**

Internationalist Commune

June 11, 2017

# Contents

1. What is the Internationalist Commune of Rojava? . . . . .	3
2. What will be the concrete work of the academy? . . . . .	3
3. What is the typical profile of a member of your commune? . . . . .	3
4. How does women's autonomy play into your organizing? . . . . .	4
5 What does Internationalism mean to you? . . . . .	4
6. A question that gets asked a lot is whether or not revolutionaries should support other revolutions or organize their own communities. How do you approach this topic? . . . . .	5

## 1. What is the Internationalist Commune of Rojava?

The Internationalist Commune of Rojava (ICR) gathers the internationalists in Rojava and is a base for international revolutionaries working in the civil structures of Northern Syria.

Since the beginning of the revolution in 2012, the philosophy the revolution is based on and its practical implementation became a new hope for revolutionaries all around the world. This made a lot of people from different countries travel to Rojava, but once in Rojava it is necessary to find the right way to support this revolution. In the beginning, it was difficult for internationalists to find their place, especially the ones who came to work in the civil society. But with the help of the Kurdish movement and the cooperation with Y.C.R. (Yekitiya Ciwanan Rojava, the Youth Movement of Rojava), **we became part of the structures of the revolution**. Nowadays, the Internationalist Commune of Rojava (ICR) is working as the other 3732 communes that are organized in Rojava.<sup>(1)</sup> The works of ICR are based on the principles and structures of the democratic autonomy, but with special focus on strengthening the internationalist dimension of the revolution. Our main slogan ('Learn, support, organize'<sup>(2)</sup>) is a good summary of our tasks.

## 2. What will be the concrete work of the academy?

The academy is part of the infrastructures we are building to deploy our works, together with the tree cooperative we are planning. The academy will be part of the system of academies of Rojava, but with the special task to teach other internationalists who come to Rojava. **We are preparing a three months education course** that will include Kurmanci lessons<sup>(3)</sup> (the Kurdish language spoken in Rojava) and seminars about the ideology and the system of the society of Rojava. The ideological work will be combined with practical work in the tree cooperative, working in an ecological project in order to support the reforestation of Rojava.

The aims of this education, besides the knowledge taught and shared, is to live a communal life that gives meaning to the education, putting in practice the things we learn in our daily life. The academy will also host an internationalist library together knowledge and experiences from revolutionary movements all over the world. **We hope to become a reference for internationalists around the world**, inspiring them to start similar projects and supporting other initiatives of internationalist self-managed academies.

## 3. What is the typical profile of a member of your commune?

There is not a 'typical profile', we are coming from different parts of the world and with different political backgrounds. But there are things that we all share. We are young, we share our internationalist and revolutionary values, and we share our hope in this revolution. **We all struggle for the liberation of women, for an ecological society and against oppression** and the centralization of power.

We are learning how to overcome the things that separate us from each other, living a communal life and giving meaning to our internationalist revolutionary perspectives. It is true that most

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<sup>(1)</sup> [www.gazetesujin.net](http://www.gazetesujin.net)

<sup>(2)</sup> [internationalistcommune.com](http://internationalistcommune.com)

<sup>(3)</sup> [internationalistcommune.com](http://internationalistcommune.com)

of the people who are part of the ICR right now are coming from Europe, where it is easier to have the possibility and resources for arriving to Rojava, but there are also people from different countries of the Middle East and people from North and South America.

All of us had contact with the kurdisch movement before, maybe with kurdisch organizations, maybe just reading books from Abdullah Öcalan or just following the political situation in the Middle East and the Rojava Revolution. Most of us came from different political organizations from what we can call 'radical left', mostly anarchists and communists, and also from different feminist organizations. **The diversity of identities and backgrounds enrich our debates and our organization**, creating a really colorful environment where we learn how to put in practice the ideas of Democratic Confederalism.

#### 4. How does women's autonomy play into your organizing?

The main reason why we, as women, organize ourselves autonomously, is to strengthen ourselves and our work. We see the approach and the force of **the womens structures as the essence and biggest potential in the revolution**, as the key to fight capitalist patriarchy and, maybe most importantly, as the initial force to create really communal and liberating ways of living, working and fighting together. Thus, we decided to have autonomous meetings and we are creating our autonomous space in the academy. Our work is deeply connected to the young womens movement and the womens movement in general, which gives us a different ground and other approaches with which we hope to change and inspire the whole structure. Examples for our works are our participation in a young womens agricultural cooperative, the womens village Jinwar,<sup>(4)</sup> the faculty of Jineolojî,<sup>(5)</sup> or working in houses or academies of the youth – as well as our work in the commune and the internationalist academy. **We want to build connections to womens and feminist groups all over the world**, knowing that our struggle needs to be united to be successful, that is why we would like to invite all women to come, join our work and the revolution.

#### 5 What does Internationalism mean to you?

We are studying this subject,<sup>(6)</sup> researching the history of how internationalism had been organized, and putting it in context with the different revolutionary movements that exist today. **When we talk about internationalism, we need to connect this heritage with the reality of our movements.**

The roots of these ideas lies on what we today call the First International of Workers, called at that time 'International Workingmen's Association' (aprox. 1864–1877). It was created for the confluence of different socialist movements. Today these words have almost no meaning, and this can be understood as a victory of the capitalist powers. If we want to organize ourselves as internationalists, maybe we need to think what we understand by socialism. We need to learn about our identities and about our societies, learning from the mistakes of our predecessors. The first international was an attempt to unite the oppressed against the oppressors, based on the

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<sup>(4)</sup> internationalistcommune.com

<sup>(5)</sup> internationalistcommune.com

<sup>(6)</sup> internationalistcommune.com

identity of the workers. But this approach left outside all the other oppressed identities, starting with the women, not included in this ‘workingmen association’.

Like our comrade Dilar Dirik pointed out, it should be a “multidimensional process that contributes to the emancipation of everyone involved.” We need to be aware of how intersectionality interacts in our societies, and **which kind of revolutionary movement will be able to overcome all the oppressions we are facing**. From gender oppression to ethnic discrimination, from colonial assimilation to adult-centralism. In Rojava, the revolution is a young kurdish women.

## **6. A question that gets asked a lot is whether or not revolutionaries should support other revolutions or organize their own communities. How do you approach this topic?**

As internationalists, our approach is that we need to be wherever is necessary. Of course we would like to be revolutionaries in our own communities, but **nowadays the Revolution of Rojava is an example for all humanity**, and is an opportunity for us to learn. That’s why we decided to come here, to support this revolution and to be part of it.<sup>(7)</sup> We are here to gather the knowledge, the experiences and the will that is needed, that will make us able to organize the international revolutionary movement able to change this world.

The globalized capitalist system rules all over the world, imposing its own mentality and way of living. We need to overcome the patriarchal oppression, on which more than 200 nation-states are based. We need to fight for the liberation of the women, defending the free and equal expression of all the gender identities. We need to stop the destruction of our planet and we need put an end to the extinction of a terrifying number of species, by creating and defending a democratic and ecologic civilization, in coexistence with the other living beings.

**Here, in Rojava, we confront our idealism with the practical work**, facing the contradictions and the problems that appear when you are really changing the society. Especially for western revolutionaries, used to reading and theorizing in university’s classrooms or on the coaches of the squat’s, the Middle East is a great school to see the reality. Here we can directly see how our privileges are based on the oppression of the people in the so called 3<sup>rd</sup> world, and how the war is used by the capitalist powers in order to fulfill their imperialist desires, and to make a lot of money by selling weapons and military technology.

The right life can not be lived in the wrong society, but **the right struggle can be fought wherever the systems of domination oppress the people**. Revolutionary persons love their people and their homeland, but don’t care about borders and states. Solidarity is the tenderness of the peoples, and life starts where the state ends. And that’s modern internationalism.

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<sup>(7)</sup> [internationalistcommune.com](http://internationalistcommune.com)

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