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Why Anarchists and Libertarians have been divided over Rojava?

Zaher Baher

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Like leftists and communists, anarchists and libertarians have been divided over Rojava. Some of them are very supportive and optimistic about the future of this experiment and the others are skeptical and suspicious.

In my opinion there are many factors contributing in this. Some of these factors not just apply to the anarchists, libertarian and ordinary people but the Kurdish people too. So this article may be the answer as well to those Kurdish frequently asking why they do not receive support from the political groups and ordinary people, not just about Rojava, in fact about any event in any parts of Kurdistan. The main factors are:

First: the attitude of the individuals in the Kurdish communities who live in Europe and other countries. Although many of us for a long time being living or even born in the countries, but has not played a big role in introducing Kurdish issues including Rojava

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to the ordinary people in the countries they reside let alone the anarchists and libertarians.

Of course, I am not talking about those Kurdish are already members or supportive of the Kurdish political parties who do not like PKK and PYD, but to the supporters for Rojava. A large number of us (Kurdish) have been spread over all Europe, US, Scandinavians and other countries. If we want support for Rojava or any other part of Kurdistan, we need to get closer to the people in these countries and consider ourselves are a part of this society.

It is a bitter fact or reality to say no many of us(Kurdish) think the country we live in, in some way is our country, its society is our society. We do not think any changes in its politics, economic, education, housing, welfare rights, law & order and many more, directly affecting us. These in addition to the immigration law, we are like many more black people and people from different ethnic minorities facing racism and discrimination from police and the employers. Regardless of what happens, majority of us are still silent and do nothing to get together with the rest of people to fight back.

While we sharing all the above issues, problems with the vast majority of the people in any country we live, although some of these problem hit us harder but still we remain ignorant and deaf about them. We therefore do not participate in independent local groups, not going to demos, protests, not supporting the workers while they are on strike and picket line. We do not take a part in the other campaigns to improve the life of the communities whether the campaigns local or national. So how can we expect the people outside of us know us and support our causes including Rojava?!!

Second: The way we do our demos and protests, we do not know how to introduce our cause to by passers or local people. The actual cause that we organize the demos or protests for, usually is getting lost among lifting so many irrelevant placards, banners, Kurdish flag and the picture of one of the leaders or a few of them. We chant some useless and expired nationalist anathemas. Because of these

that play a very big role in that whether this revolution happens in Rojava or in any advance country like UK or US.

History shows that the human being so far has only seen a couple of stages/ societies which is Primitive and the class society that continues until present. There is no doubt that History proved that division of human being history to reach socialist/anarchist society damaged the social revolution badly. This is a separate subject as how the leftists and communists throughout last century and before until now damaged the class struggles and principle of socialism as much as the right wing politicians and their parties done. I will write about this soon.

class and the history of developing of human being in reaching socialism/anarchism. For this, they divided this history to five stages before achieving our aim. The five stages are the Primitive society, Slavery, Feudalism, Capitalism then Socialism and after all Communism (they even separated socialism from communism). While in somewhere like Rojava finding companies and factories are seldom, therefore, in the view of the Marxist, there is no working class or proletarians there. In short while Rojava has not reached capitalism how could the revolution start from there? How can dictatorship of proletarian be set up while there is no proletarian? So any thought or any talk about starting revolution in Rojava for these comrades is unacceptable.

It is very pity our comrades cannot see or cannot consider the exploitation of people throughout history it has been a main issue. There was a class society, hierarchy society, high class and low class, very rich and very poor, there were a tiny minority of elites and the vast majority of people. So regardless of this division mentioned above and having many stages, but all the time was one question exist, one struggle raised and remains the same until we achieve the classless society, socialism/anarchism

While this was the society's situation there was always alternative, there has always been grounds of replacing of that society by forming/building socialist/anarchist society. There was no doubt that the societies developed and progressed throughout history but happening the social revolution has nothing to do with this division or to do with the condition of societies should reach the capitalism stage before the socialism. The basis of revolution is existing of exploitation, the class division, having people on the top of the society with all the privileges and the rest in the bottom of the society having nothing or very little and also people must be conscious and aware about all the above and ready to rise up. In other words, the social revolution can happen in any society, anywhere regardless of the stage they are in, but maintaining it and total victory of this revolution are depends on many factors

our demos, protests fail to delivery our purpose and just remain attractive to ourselves. While this is our way and our manner to introduce our causes to people, how can we expect them to know the exact situation, let's say in Rojava?!!

Third: The historical bitter experiences that the anarchists/libertarians movements have since the first International/International Workingmen's Association in 19th century. They involved heavily and supported it but later on been kicked out and accused. Then in 20th century bloody experiences with Bolshevik, following by the Spain civil war in 1936/37. This history throughout last century from time to time repeated itself in different countries. Their support and solidarity for those groups, movements made the enemy strong but damaged the anarchist's movement and caused so many lives. Because of these terrible and bloody experiences many individual anarchists and anarchist groups/organizations remain very cautious in approaching Rojava.

In Rojava and Bakur (Northern Kurdistan-Turkey Kurdistan) we see a couple of powerful political parties: PKK and PYD who have been heavily involved and they are behind both movements. This made a part of anarchists difficult or unable to understand, or seeing the big steps that both movements in both parts towards social revolution. They still look into PKK and its movement through the glasses of 80th, 90th of the last century and beginning of this century. There was no doubt PKK done terrible things at that time even Ocalan himself acknowledged that there was involvement in terrorist act toward its own people and people outside of the party.

However, many of the anarchists do not see there is an internal struggle inside PKK over idea and principals of anarchist between anarchist's tendency of minority and the majority of the party that they struggle to keep its structure as it was. I am sure the outcome of this struggle will be positive. It is not realistic to think or expect that PKK and PYD as a party giving up hierarchical organization. They cannot be transferred to anarchist organization as whole. However, in quick look of PKK's history we can see it

has been changed and made so many positive steps. For example, they do not believe in a nation state and the notion of United Kurdistan, to certain extent they are or a part of them are anti power, anti authority. They transferred their weight to the towns to keep the struggles among the workers and poor people; they are in the process of abandoning the guerrilla war and involving in peace process. They also believe in freedom, living the people together in peace and harmony regardless of their differences in ethnicity, religion, and gender. They are very serious the environment and ecology issues and also believing in social revolution. They supported forming so many radical local groups, believing in direct democracy and direct action. Ignoring and not acknowledging the above changes come either from arrogance or simply have no clue about what was going on in this movement and unable to read the situation properly.

In my opinion the best attitude towards Rojava is “supportive and being critical” in the same time. Criticizing it alone and keeping distance from it, does not benefit our current anarchist movement. This attitude again shows incapability of recognizing the movement in its realistic way and that bring blame of history over us. Meantime supporting it without criticizing the negative sides of it, again shows that we do not see this movement realistically and make ourselves very optimistic and seeing it as a perfect one. Having this attitude, once the movement fails to meet our demands, we will be very disappointed and keep ourselves a far distance from any movement in the future and always look into them in a suspicious way.

Four: Ideological attitude and looking for purity and perfectness in the movement. I believe this approach in best is an irresponsible and in worse is naivety. How we expect purity in the movement of Rojava and Bakur while even the minority of those people participating in the movement are not totally pure? So it is important to recognize this movement as a mass movement. We cannot get pure movement unless you have pure people. If you have pure, re-

sponsible and conscious people about what was going on in the society we did not need revolution. We need to look into Rojava with its all positive and negative steps. We should support the positive part and we also should be hard on its negative side too, not just to draw the attention of people about what is going wrong, but also to support fixing it.

We have not seen a movement like Rojava since the Zapatista’s movement of 1994. What happened in Rojava with all its faults so far is the best we have especially when we see the outcome of Arab Spring, and seeing Rojava exactly took opposite direction. Up to this moment, this movement steps towards right direction although facing so many attacks and threats, like, war with Isis and other terrorist organizations, possibility of Assad’s forces to return and invade the region, possibility of invading a part of it by Turkey government, possibility of war with Syrian Free Army, reconciliation of neighboring countries on their expenses and rebuilding Kobane and the rest of Rojava by US, Western Countries and their companies and financial institution. Rojava faces all these threat with many more, so what is the attitude of anarchists and libertarians here? Solidarity and support to take the right direction or keeping distance and ignoring it until losing whatever so far been achieved? Which one is the right approach?

Five: Many of the anarchists and Libertarians came from Marxist or Marxist-Leninist background. Although these comrades adopted some of the anarchist principals but still some of their views, approaches and analyzing are Marxists. Therefore, they find it extremely difficult to believe and expect the social revolution can be happened in developing countries, especially somewhere like Rojava. This approach is ideological and religion approach not anarchist one as they believe if anything is not written in the old books are difficult to happen. Many of us know the Marxist’s books have confused people and distorted historical struggles about achieving socialism/anarchism. These comrades still they use the same Marxist, Marxist-Leninists definition for the working