

INTERVIEW | ‘A People Without an Army Has Nothing’

Munzur Bakır and Nergiz Asya, TKP-ML TIKKO Martyr Eylem Yıldız Battalion Commanders; With the fall of the Syrian administration, he answered our questions about the new administration in Syria and the process in Rojava.

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With the fall of the Syrian government in the first days of December, the new administration in Syria and the process in Rojava have been at the top of the international agenda.

We asked Munzur Bakır, one of the TKP-ML TIKKO Martyr Eylem Yıldız Battalion Commanders, our questions about this process.

- Hello. First of all, let's start with the latest developments in Syria. How do Syria and Rojava take place in the axis of increasing imperialist aggression and popular resistance in the Middle East? Also, what would you like to say about possible future developments?

- First of all, the last week of January is a week when we commemorate our immortals, on this occasion we bow with respect in front of our immortals and reiterate our commitment to them. Ali Haydar Yıldız, Meral Yakar, Cemil Oka, Mehmet Zeki Şerit, Hayrettin Bakış, Ali Uçar, Zeki Uygun, Yel Mountain martyrs, Süheyla Dağdeviren, Munzur Keskin, Beşler, Yurdal Yıldırım Haydar Arğal, Murat Tekgöz, Cengiz İçli and our twelve comrades who were martyred in Dersim Aliboğazı and our general secretaries who were immortalised in the line of duty while leading our party, we hereby reiterate the promise that we will carry this uninterrupted war to the end with the excitement, patience and enthusiasm of the first day. History has given us the honour of being the comrades of hundreds of our immortals and we will be worthy of history.

Especially in the last two months, Syria has been at the top of the world agenda. The sixty-year-old Baathist regime collapsed in a short period of two weeks with the ‘counter-attack to prevent attacks’ launched by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) against Aleppo. This is how the collapse of the Baathist regime is propagated in public opinion or in the international media. But we cannot look at it in this way. It is clear that there is no war between HTS and its affiliated jihadist gang groups and the Baath regime, and the war cannot be considered as a localised war. From this point of view, it would be more accurate to evaluate it as the mutual moves developed by the inter-imperialist rivalry in the Middle East.

After the attack of the Palestinian resistance groups against the Zionist state of Israel on 7 October 2023, Zionist Israel created a ground for its regional expansionism by justifying this attack. Israel's regional interests and the interests of NATO-oriented imperialist powers, especially US imperialism, intersected at the point of redesigning the region. And precisely for this reason, the Zionist state of Israel has received great support both financially and militarily from the NATO-orientated powers, especially the USA, Britain and Germany.

The US and EU-orientated imperialist bloc acted in agreement that Russia's advantageous position in the region must be weakened and Iran's hegemony in the region must be broken. For this purpose, weakening and destroying the local structures called the 'axis of resistance' affiliated to Iran, forcing Iran to withdraw to its own borders and depriving Russia of its bases in the region and ensuring its exit from the region were exactly where the interests of the US/NATO-oriented imperialist bloc and the Zionist state of Israel converged.

First, Gaza was razed to the ground and Palestinian resistance groups, especially HAMAS, were dealt heavy blows. Subsequently, the Lebanese leg of the resistance axis was tried to collapse by inflicting heavy blows on Hezbollah. After a certain distance was achieved here, the jihadist gangs in Syria were unleashed and Damascus was captured.

The power that kept the Baathist regime standing militarily was the support provided by Russia and the active deployment of Shiite groups in the region. After the 7 October attack, the Shiite groups were weakened and debilitated by the systematic attacks of the Israeli state. Russia, for the most part, was content to watch this process from the outside.

Now the situation in Syria has radically changed and taken a completely different turn. The seizure of central power by ISIS and similar jihadist gangs in Syria should be considered not only as the end of an era but also as the beginning of a bloody period.

It is necessary to act with the knowledge that the US and British monopolies have replaced the Russian imperialists in Syria and that their local support is the gangs, and to foresee what awaits us regionally in the coming period.

Today, the HTS, which is being paved the way by shining in the Syrian specific, is far from being a structure that will cover the whole in a cosmopolitan, multi-national and multi-faith country like Syria. As we have mentioned, HTS is based on a Sunni Salafist ideology, and this ideology is a structure based on the

principles of conquering, plundering and looting. It is not even realistic for this structure to create a liberal bourgeois profile in the classical sense.

In fact, with the collapse of the Ba'ath regime and the exit of Shiite groups from the region, massacres against the Alawite faith have already begun. In terms of forming their own organisation, the most disorganised section in Syria today is the Alawite section. And the massacres were started from here first. Although some Alawite resistance groups have formed at the local level, they have not yet formed an integrated structure. In this respect, the Alevi community can only stop these massacres by forming its own armed organisation and resistance line. It seems that Alevis have no other means of self-protection than forming their own self-defence. It is remembered that HTS's attempt to intervene in the regions where the Druze minority lived in the south was met with resistance from the Druze in the region. The Druze demanded reassurance. Therefore, under these circumstances, all oppressed nationalities and beliefs in Syria have no choice but to resist and organise their own self-defence. It is inevitable to organise an armed force to protect one's own existence in the region called the Middle East. In the words of Chairman Mao, 'a people without an army has nothing.' The truth of this statement proves itself once again.

- What happened in the region under the control of the Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria during this process? As far as we can see, HTS did not directly attack Rojava. However, there were attacks by the Salafist jihadist gangs called the Syrian National Army (SNA), which was directly organised and paid by the Turkish Republic. These attacks are still continuing. What would you like to say about this?

- Yes, Rojava's position stands in a slightly different place in this process. For 12 years, it has organised itself as an autonomous system at the regional level and has created certain military and political organisations. It had to meet this new process with the possibilities and opportunities that this revealed.

It can even be said that the region in the most advantageous position was the Regional Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria. And how effectively did it use this advantageous position in such a process? This is a matter of debate. In this process, Minbij was lost in a short period of time. QSD forces had to withdraw from places they entered, such as Derazor. It had to leave the Tal Rifaat-Shahba line. And all this happened in a very short time.

We believe that it is necessary to look at all these events with a critical eye. However, after all these withdrawals, a resistance that could change the fate of the Rojava Revolution began.

-You say that the resistance on the Tishrin-Qaraqozak line can change the fate of the revolution. This resistance gained a different dimension with the participation of Rojava peoples. People and fighters are fighting in the same positions in different ways but for the same goal. Could you share your thoughts on this subject?

- It is precisely here that the resistance on the Tishrin and Qaraqozak line gains meaning. The fascist Turkish state and the SMO gangs affiliated to it, after their easy success in Tal Rifaat and Minbic, have embarked on a comprehensive attack on Rojava as a whole and Kobane in particular. Kobane is not only an important city for the Autonomous Region of Northern and Eastern Syria, but also one of the symbolic cities of the victory against ISIS. In this respect, the capture of Kobane would provide a significant military, political and psychological advantage to the fascist Turkish state and its gang groups. After the fall of Minbic, an intense attack was launched from the Karakozak and Tishrin lines to surround and capture Kobane.

In both lines, the QSD and its affiliated forces organised a strong resistance line and resisted with a strong resistance. At the current stage, the attacks of the gangs and the Turkish state have been significantly broken and the invasion attempt of Kobane has been frustrated. As a result of the resistance on both the Karakozak and Tishrin battle fronts, there are escapes and dispersals within the gang groups. Every gang group that came against the QSD fighters was either destroyed or fled in a very short time. The fate of the latest Uzbek groups was no different. The fascist Turkish state sought to find a solution in the effective use of warplanes and all kinds of aerial vehicles but failed to break the resistance. Recently, there has been an intense bombardment without any discrimination.

The most important factor that makes the resistance on the Tishrin line different and meaningful is that the people also supported the QSD fighters and marched to the resistance positions and kept watch at these positions. The fact that the people themselves marched to the battlefields was the most important proof that the democratic structure in Rojava was supported by the people. In fact, the people have demonstrated their support for the QSD fighters on the front in different ways, both by holding rallies on the streets and by cooking and sending food to the fighters on the front, but a further stage of this is to take their place in the resistance positions.

The fascist Turkish state and its gangs have shown their intolerance towards this ownership of the people by bombing the areas where our people are located with warplanes and carrying out massacres. The fascist Turkish state once again

showed its massacring face in Tishrin. Over twenty people were massacred and dozens of people were seriously injured. Attacks are still continuing.

The march of the people to the war positions has undoubtedly been the most revolutionary move of the last period. It has also become a great source of morale for the fighters fighting in the positions. The distinction between just and unjust war has once again been revealed in the reality of a resisting people. QSD fighters, as the rightful side of this war, draw their strength from this very people.

The technique of warfare has been in a state of continuous and rapid development for a certain period of time. Especially with the introduction of drone systems on the battlefield, the form of warfare has changed drastically. With the Turkish state starting to use this system, it has gained a relative advantage especially against the guerrilla. Accompanied by racist fascist propaganda, the Turkish state issued deadlines claiming that the revolutionary forces fighting now have no remedy against them.

With the HPG forces developing counter-technical attack tools on simple drone systems, the Turkish state's propaganda of invincibility has now been thrown into the dustbin of history. Likewise, with the effective use of drone systems by the QSD forces, a significant advantage and success has been achieved against the gangs on the war fronts. The kamikaze drones named Brusks by the QSD fighters have become the fearful dream of the gangs and of course the fascist Turkish state.

In fact, it is quite appropriate to the nature of the war. Each technique develops by creating its own counter technique. Against the TB2s of the Turkish state, Brusks have a feature that changes the course of the war.

- 26 January is the 10th anniversary of the liberation of Kobane from ISIS gangs. How would you evaluate the resistance at that time and today?

-Yes, 26 January is the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Kobane from the occupation of ISIS gangs, and today Kobane is again under threat from the fascist Turkish state and ISIS remnant gangs. Just as everyone took their place in the battle positions against ISIS attacks that day, so today they are taking their place without hesitation against the invasion attacks of the Turkish state and its jihadist gangs.

In fact, there is no difference in essence between the ISIS invasion ten years ago and the threat of invasion by the Turkish state today. The only difference is that while in the first case the Turkish state was content with military and financial support, today it is attempting to invade directly.

The Kurdish people and fighters put up an epic resistance against ISIS, paving the way for the defeat of ISIS. At that time, our comrades also wrote the name of our party in history as part of this epic resistance. It should be known that we will be worthy of our party's line of resistance to protect and defend the gains of the Kurdish nation, no matter what.

Today, conditions are positively different compared to ten years ago. Compared to ten years ago, the people are more organised and have become a part of the democratic national gains of Rojava. The people of Kobane have the consciousness and self-sacrifice to protect and defend their own gains. The people of Kobane have shown this with their extraordinary efforts and sacrifices in the last two months.

If the fascist Turkish state falls again into the mistake it fell into ten years ago, this will be the beginning of the end for it.

-How do you establish the relationship between the defence of the Rojava Revolution against the attacks of the Turkish state and the Turkish revolution?

- The Middle East is a geography with high transitivity as a region. And because of this, a development in one place directly affects other parts. When it comes to the Kurdish national question, this reality comes to the fore more. The Kurdish question is a regional problem. In this respect, the Rojava Kurdish national revolution stands in an important place in weakening the regional reaction, especially the Turkish state, with its achievements and development. It is necessary to evaluate the Rojava revolution and the democratic people's revolution in Turkey on the axis of the Kurdish nation's right to free secession. Breaking the annexationist occupying attacks of the Turkish state against Rojava will be a factor that will accelerate the defeat of fascism.

Today, the Turkish state perceives the Kurdish national gains and a possible Kurdish status in Rojava as a destructive threat to itself and tries to do its best to eliminate these gains. For this purpose, it pursues an expansionist annexationist policy in Syria and wants to liquidate the Kurdish national movement with all its components.

For this purpose, it has put all kinds of policies into action in different ways and methods. But every policy serves the strategy of collapse and annihilation.

The defeat of the attacks on Rojava has a high potential to mobilise different dynamics by opening unbridgeable breaches in the walls of chauvinism.

People from all walks of life, even at different levels, need to defend and mobilise for the Kurdish national democratic gains in Rojava. Without the elimination of chauvinism, there will be no liberation for the workers and labourers of the Turkish nation. The struggle against chauvinism passes through the defence of the right of oppressed nations and nationalities to secede freely.

-In the war against the TC and SMO gangs, on the one hand the resistance has reached an important level, on the other hand martyrs are being martyred. You welcome the Week of Remembrance of the Immortals of the Party and Revolution in such a process. Finally, could you share your feelings and thoughts on this subject?

- Hundreds of fighters and people from the people have been martyred in the last two months on the war fronts and in the air strikes of the Turkish state. With great sacrifice and self-sacrifice, a great war is being waged on the front lines to defend the liberated lands. Once again, when we look at the developments of the last two months, as I stated above, Chairman Mao's thesis that 'a people without an army has nothing' has been proven once again in Syria.

Our party has immortalised hundreds of cadres and fighters to create the army of the people throughout its more than half a century of armed struggle. We are aware that true freedom will only come with an army that will destroy those who take it from our hands. Our immortals fought for this, and we will continue to fight for this.

INTERVIEW | 'As long as the struggle continues, the wind will always be on our side!'

We talked to Nergiz Asya, one of the commanders of TKP-ML TIKKO Ş.Eylem Yıldız Battalion, about the new administration in Syria, the events in Rojava and the ongoing attacks of the Turkish state.

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We made an interview with Nergiz Asya, one of the commanders of Ş.Eylem Yıldız Battalion, about the new administration in Syria after the fall of the Syrian government, the events in Rojava and the ongoing attacks of the Turkish state.

- There have been many developments in the Middle East in the recent period. As a result of the resistance against the Israeli occupation in Palestine, the Israeli government was forced to sit down at the table. Similarly, in Rojava, there is an ongoing resistance against the attacks of the Turkish state. While

the Turkish state says ‘solution’ on the one hand, it continues its attacks on the other. Considering these developments, how do you evaluate the talks with Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the Kurdish National Freedom Movement, and the developments awaiting the Rojava Revolution in this context?

- With the Aqsa Flood operation launched by the resistance forces in Palestine against Israel, the US-UK-EU imperialists accelerated the process of turning the Middle East, especially Palestine, into a blood market again and trying to profit from this market by shedding the blood of the peoples. For a long time, in order to break the increasing influence of the China-Russia imperialist bloc in the Middle East and to narrow the sphere of influence of the Iranian mullah regime, they have attempted a redesign in Lebanon and Syria, starting from Palestine, through their representatives in the region, Zionist Israel and fascist Turkish fascist states and their local collaborator forces. In the war for market dominance that the western imperialists put into practice in the Middle East, among other obstacles, the attacks of the Turkish state against the gains of the Kurdish nation took place. In fact, the USA and the western imperialist powers are aware that a reconciliation between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement in the region would serve their interests more.

From this point of view, they paved the way for the attacks of the Turkish Republic against the Autonomous Administration, especially in Rojava. In other words, if the Turkish state could occupy the territory of the Autonomous Administration completely or to a large extent, this would be preferable for the imperialists. However, the tremendous resistance of the Syrian Democratic Forces (QSD), especially on the Tishrin-Qaraqozak line, frustrated the dreams and hopes of the Turkish Republic. With this resistance, the western imperialists also said to the Turkish Republic *‘look, you could not use the opportunity we gave you, now it is our turn in our solution’*, or they will say it as soon as possible. The Tishrin-Qaraqozak resistance is indeed full of lessons and experiences that need to be analysed. This is the reason for the delay in talks with PKK leader A.Öcalan. Their attacks to liquidate the Autonomous Administration through military operations have failed and they have attempted to reconcile. In other words, the Kurdish issue has long since left the borders of Turkey and has become a regional issue. In this respect, it seems possible to evaluate these attempts as steps towards the ‘solution’ of the Kurdish National Question in accordance with the plans of the western imperialists in the Middle East.

Our party will undoubtedly make more comprehensive evaluations on this issue.

However, if I need to say a few things about the question you asked about the future of the Rojava Revolution; In a way, the HTS administration will have to meet the demands of the Autonomous Administration in Rojava.

This necessity is related to the pressure brought by the resistance and gains of the peoples on the one hand, and on the other hand, the imperialists' unwillingness to create a Syrian state centred on a strong HTS administration. In other words, the imperialists will establish a system in the way they can rule comfortably.

‘Tishrin- Qaraqozak bridge did not and will not give passage to the invaders!’

- In fact, just as you have stated, this process should not be handled independently from the goals of the imperialists. Especially the developments in Syria and Rojava provide a lot of information within the scope of the imperialists' goals. It is also a fact that the resistance against this has reversed the wind. You also said that the Tishrin-Qaraqozak resistance is full of many lessons and experiences that need to be analysed. Could you elaborate on this a little bit?

- In fact, dozens of things can be said. But I would like to draw attention to a few points in particular. In the period preceding this resistance, that is, along with the HTS's move into the Syrian regime's territory, the SMO gangs affiliated with the Turkish Republic also attacked and occupied Tal Rifaat-Shahba and then Minbij. Although the QSD forces showed a certain resistance against these attacks, it was not at the desired level and they had to retreat from these places. With these withdrawals, the psychological moral superiority passed to the Turkish Republic and its gangs. You can imagine the damage this caused both among the people and among the military forces. The Tishrin-Qaraqozak resistance overturned all these negativities and re-established a tremendous moral superiority, military and political success and the trust of the people. The resistance on that line paved the way to protect all Rojava lands and gains with a great struggle. Today, if many imperialist states and enemies of freedom such as the Zionist state of Israel talk about the rights of the Kurdish people, it is because they realise that this will cannot be broken.

From this point of view, the most important factor for all negotiations and agreements to be made and to be made to be more in favour of the peoples is the resistance and successes shown in the field.

- So how do you evaluate this resistance in military terms? In recent years, many things have been said and analysed about the development and use of

technology. You said that the dominant factor is resistance. We also see that the masses of people took their place in Tishrin. How did the participation of the people affect this process?

- Yes, when I said it was full of lessons and experiences, I wanted to evaluate this dimension as well. This is precisely the pillars of the resistance, the success of the military forces and the leadership of the people in this resistance.

For more than 45 days, the resistance, which has not been broken despite the most brutal attacks of the Turkish Republic and SMO gangs with all kinds of dirty methods, on the contrary, has achieved very valuable military successes. First of all, by learning from the mistakes made in Minbiç, when the will ‘*There will be no withdrawal under any circumstances*’ was put forward, a practice in accordance with this will was exhibited. In other words, once the ships were burnt, a war resistance was put forward at the highest dimensions.

Of course, one of the distinguishing aspects of this historic resistance was the use of kamikaze drones called ‘Brusk’. There were some days when nearly eighty strikes were carried out against the enemy ranks. By the way, these are only the ones that were hit accurately. Of course, these air strikes had a very serious impact on the enemy elements. However, although air strikes were constantly reflected in the press, assassination, sabotage, missile and heavy weapon actions in various branches also played an important role in this war. Of course, the most important are the actions carried out by the operational forces. I want to underline this in particular because the Turkish state also supported its own gangs by carrying out very high-level air strikes against freedom fighters, but these air strikes do not matter much when there are gangs whose will to fight on the field is broken. In other words, despite so many air strikes, the enemy cannot advance even one step. Although the drone actions carried out by the QSD forces have a great effect on this, the main reason is the revolutionary fighter element fighting in the positions. This once again confirms that the decisive factor in war is the human will.

Apart from that, perhaps for the first time in the history of the Rojava Revolution, military forces and the people are protecting their positions together in a war. Indeed, the vigil actions that the people started at the Tishrin Dam added a very different dimension to the resistance. It gave great morale and courage to the fighters in the positions. The Turkish state, seeing that the resistance reached the highest level with the participation of the people, rained bombs on the people almost every day. However, these bombs caused neither the people nor the military forces to retreat. On the contrary, the masses met the bombs with a more faithful, more stubborn resistance. From my point of view,

the biggest gain of this war was the helplessness and helplessness created by the people, the biggest bomb, on the enemy targets.

‘We will renew our promise to be militants worthy of them!’

-A very intense process is taking place. You are welcoming the Party and Revolution Martyrs Week in such an atmosphere? What would you like to say if we ask you to share your feelings and thoughts?

- Since 1978, when your party was founded and at the same time declared the last week of January as ‘Party and Revolution Martyrs’ Week’, it has always welcomed all weeks uninterruptedly in war and struggle. In this respect, although there is no significant change, there are certain peculiarities in this year's Immortals Week. Under normal conditions, we have been organising commemorations with all our forces together in all fields of activity for many years, this year we do not have such an opportunity. However, each of our comrades, each of our units will commemorate our immortalised ones as a single heart and consciousness from their own areas. We will recite the oath of our People's Army, which we recite in the military ceremony we hold in the last week of January, which has become a tradition every year within our People's Army, on different fronts and areas.

We expressed this in the commemoration we made last year; *‘Maybe we will not be together next year, we may even be alone, but surely each of our comrades must take an oath and reiterate their loyalty to the party and our immortals.’* This year it will be exactly like that. In some places, our comrades will be alone, in some places in units, but with the consciousness of what we are doing and being a rank and file of our party and our class struggle, we will reiterate our loyalty to our leading comrade, our party, our immortals and all our comrades who continue the struggle, and we will renew our promise to be militants worthy of them.

-Your evaluations are very important in such a historical transition process. Finally, is there anything you would like to add?

-Actually, I have said my last words, but if I need to express a few more things, I can say the following: While there are many developments all over the world that the wind is blowing from the imperialists, from the oppressing classes, there is such a reality; for example, for a pigeon to fly in the sky, it needs to move its wings up and down. This is a condition for it to stay in the sky and fly. However, as long as the struggle exists, that is, as long as we continue, the wind will always be on our side. In that respect, although this war waged by the oppressor classes against the oppressed seems to be in favour of the oppressors

for the time being, the oppressed will turn the wind to themselves by taking their power from their own wings. For this to happen, everyone on the side of the oppressed must be more faithful, determined, more courageous, sacrificing and warlike than yesterday. As comrade Mehmet Demirdağ, the 4th General Secretary of our party, said, '*We can, we must, we will do what we say!*'