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**Syria**

# **“Our lack of weapons puts us in a position of weakness”**

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**Questions to Lorca, Midou and Abu Layla [1]**, officers of the Popular Liberation Factions (FLP), a military structure created by the Current of the Revolutionary Left (CRL), a Syrian revolutionary Marxist organization.

**The FLP was officially created a few months ago. Is it the logical culmination of the approach of activists who had for a long time participated in armed actions as part of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) or other groups, or in the "armed turn" of activists of the Current of the Revolutionary Left (CRL)? Is it a measure of protection of the CRL or the expression of a conviction that this regime will only be defeated by arms?**

The creation of the FLP is the natural result of the transformation of the peaceful struggle into armed combat and is a reaction to the brutality of the ruling oligarchy. This has led large sections of the population to take up arms to defend themselves and their communities. Large areas of the country, having got rid of the presence of the oligarchy, have become "liberated", but the attacks of the armed forces of the government have made the armed struggle the dominant aspect of combat in these areas. It is difficult to act and be present there without taking part in it. In fact, although the announcement of the formation of the FLP came late – with regard to the constitution of popular and democratic armed brigades in the first place, then that of others, reactionary and extremist "takfiris", which have no connection with the revolution and its goals - it has responded to the objective developments imposed by the revolutionary process: the savage violence of the oligarchy against the masses, the arming of broad sectors of the masses, the threatening rise in the strength of reactionary and counter-revolutionary armed forces. The first nuclei of the FLP were the work of comrades who were already well engaged in the armed struggle, in democratic factions. Through their experience and their roots, they shared the need of the masses to make revolutionary action evolve towards the establishment of a genuine revolutionary group, expressing the revolutionary goals of freedom, equality and social justice and fighting for their achievement within the mass struggle and not from outside it. The FLP are closer to the concept of the "United Front". This has brought about a qualitative transformation of the activity of a small number of comrades whose action was previously limited to civil activity. But this form of mass struggle did not, however, represent an overall shift of the policy of our organization, the CRL, towards armed struggle. It simply means that we do not reject any form of mass struggle if it serves the above-mentioned aims of the popular revolution and represents a step towards its triumph. This allows us to expand our influence by a concrete and realistic analysis of objective and subjective conditions.

**What is your level of collaboration with the FSA and other local battalions?**

There is cooperation and coordination, but in a limited way, on the one hand because of divergent views and objectives, or disparities between positions due to the geographic location where comrades are fighting and the nature of other organizations. On the other hand, these organizations do not generally accept anyone else. There are, however, also links and good coordination with several "democratic" groups of the FSA and of local brigades where we find support and shelter. But we have not up to now been able to achieve a qualitative leap in this cooperation, because of the weakness of our resources and our support. The absence of support that would enable us to deploy and to confront the forces of the regime and the extremist reactionary groups in the necessary way largely hinders our activity and limits our cooperation with these "democratic" groups of the FSA or of local brigades.

Let us not forget that our activity has not met with any echo in the media, but rather the code of silence, and that the international media are only interested in the "Islamic State" (IS) and its peers, and – by a slanderous shortcut – in the mutation of our original popular revolution into a simple "sectarian war" or "war against IS". Let us not forget that we are working underground, which hardly allows us to report our actions.

**The FLP have been faced with repression and also death...**

The fighting comrades of the FLP face danger every day. A few months ago, while the comrades were going to lend a hand to a group of the FSA, there was a clash with elements of the Al Nosra Front, which is reactionary and extremist. Two comrades died for the cause, and a third was wounded. On the other side, members of the Al Nosra Front were killed and others wounded. The strengthening of the popular resistance and the unity of the armed struggle, regardless of race or religious denomination, is at the heart of our priorities and was the main reason for the formation of the FLP. The departure of comrades to Kobané fits into this framework. The confrontation conducted against both the extremist organizations and the regime is the condition of the triumph of the popular revolution and it is the only way to build a free and democratic Syria. We are confronted simultaneously with these two forces, which are enemies of the popular revolution and the interests of the masses.

**Before taking the decision to strengthen the resistance in Kobané, had the FLP not already confronted the counter-revolutionary groups, or did they concentrate all their efforts against the regime?**

The departure of comrades for Kobané to contribute to the confrontation with the fascist IS follows an independent decision of the FLP. It is part of our belief that the liberation of the masses, regardless of their nationality, requires the unity of their common struggle against their common enemies. As the CRL, we have links with the Kurdish parties and popular currents which are present there.

**Did you attempt to reach Kobané at the call of other forces or in coordination with them, or independently? What was the obstacle to this participation?**

The action of the combatant comrades who have gone to Kobané is conducted in coordination with the forces and the popular leadership present in Kobané. Of course, we face a lot of obstacles to moving around and deploying. To travel to the "liberated" areas is dangerous because these areas change control, going from the hegemony of the FSA to that of the forces of the regime or the fascists of the IS, Al Nosra or their allies. However, the principal obstacle is that of our own resources. The lack of support and funding prevents us from recruiting new fighters, because we are unable to provide them with weapons, whereas those who wish to join us are numerous. Our deficiency in weapons puts us in a position of weakness in many of our battles. To take an example, the comrades who went to Kobané because they wanted to participate in the fight against the danger of the IS had only light individual weapons.

**The CRL is a young group. What about the FLP, its social and feminine components?**

It is true that the CRL is a young organization, one which has the same age as the revolution. However, in exceptional circumstances of difficulty and cruelty, and in a relatively short space of time, we have been able to transform a small group into a genuine revolutionary organization. And we have gone from a few dozen activists in the first two years of our existence to what we are today, more than double that, while other left groups have broken up or disappeared. We are not satisfied with maintaining ourselves and keeping going; we are constantly developing and we are structuring our activity in all sectors of the struggle. We take a great interest in the rank-and-file coordinating committees and the original local councils that remain, despite the reduction in their numbers, because they are the forms of self-organization and self-management created by the masses in their revolution. The FLP were created by our comrades and by fighters who have adopted the programme of the popular revolution while being in the field of the popular armed struggle. They come from various social layers: workers, poor peasants, students, civil servants and unemployed ... The FLP are mainly composed of young men and women, in the image of Syrian society. Their goal is to continue the armed struggle and to extend it, and they are open to anyone who adopts the programme of the popular revolution against tyranny, exploitation and imperialist hegemony. We are fighting in dramatic conditions, despite our limited resources and lack of support, because we are genuine revolutionaries and

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we want to achieve freedom and justice. We face difficulties and dangers on a daily basis. It is a struggle to ensure the daily needs of the comrade combatants. Despite all this, they remain determined, motivated by the love of freedom, humanity, justice and equality and by the aspiration to a life of dignity and justice. The FLP are at present limited, for many reasons - including the absence of a secure base for some time - to young comrades and to the participation of women comrades as those responsible for information, whereas women are well represented in the ranks of the CRL, particularly in its leading bodies.

### **What is your analysis of the present relationship of forces between the revolution and the counter-revolution, on the politically and military levels?**

Recently, there has been a clear advance of the counter-revolutionary forces at the expense of the popular revolution. But it is only one moment of the revolution, which is in no way definitively fixed. It is capable of changing every day, and it evolves according to the zone, to the support received by all the parties, to the fluctuating relationship of forces on the terrain. The forces of the counter-revolution have got their hands on the oil and gas wells in order to ensure funding and liquid cash, not to mention the support received from reactionary Arab forces and personalities for the purpose of putting an end to the genuine revolutionary forces and having the revolution aborted in order to convert it into a religious or regional conflict in the long term. On the political and popular level, despite the tragedies experienced by the Syrian people, this people is still committed to the objectives of the revolution: putting an end to the regime and to its detachments, the extremist jihadi fascist organizations. This requires genuine solidarity and support from all the revolutionary and democratic forces in the world.

### **Do you need a concrete expression of international solidarity? In what form?**

The class struggle is not local but global. The victory of the insurgent masses in our country will overturn the relationship of forces in favour of the forces of emancipation on a world scale. International solidarity is not only a duty for all anticapitalists, but a necessity, as Che Guevara said. It is not enough to observe with sympathy our ferocious struggle for the victory of the popular revolution against the criminal regime and the savage forces of the counter-revolution, which receive support at the regional level. So that the revolutionary left can open the way in a more effective fashion, we have a desperate need of concrete solidarity and of the support of democratic forces and our revolutionary comrades around the world. This is what we need to see our project grow and to revitalize popular resistance and expand our activity throughout Syria. This requires a clear programme, ongoing support and coordination with all our comrades around the world in order to achieve our goals. However, for the moment we have not only received moral support for our revolution, which we appreciate at its true value, but which is not enough with regard to the violent struggle that we are waging against several enemies. We, the FLP, as the fighting sector of the CRL, are acting in difficult conditions. Every minute sees a threat to the lives of our comrades. We have unquestionably need of real political, logistic and financial international help and solidarity. We call on comrades and friends to form committees in solidarity with our struggle and with that the masses of our country, for freedom, equality and social justice, for a better world.

*Translated from Arabic to French by Luiza Roscane for **Inprecor**, translation to English from French by **International Viewpoint**.*

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[1] These are pseudonyms.