

<http://divergences.be/spip.php?article401>



Conscientious Objection Platform

- Archives - Archives Générales 2006 - 2022 - 2007 - N° 7 Mai/ May2007 - International - Turquie/Turkey -

Date de mise en ligne : lundi 14 mai 2007

Copyright © Divergences Revue libertaire en ligne - Tous droits réservés

<http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/local/cache-vignettes/L86xH400/3-4-1e7f7.jpg>

A lot of people wonder why one would choose to be a conscientious objector instead of living comfortably ? What will you say about this ?

As military service is obligatory for men in Turkey, the prerequisite of a comfortable life is conducting that service. When I made my conscientious objection public, I was aware that I was set on a long and painful journey. I knew that I would never be peaceful if I had done my military service, held a weapon, learned how to use a weapon, maybe shot at a creature, humiliated others and was humiliated myself, filled with militarist elements and returned back to my own life. Whereas now I know that I am not a spare part for the militarist structures and feel the relief of it. Twenty years ago there were some stories my grandfather used to tell me. During Dersim Revolt he was a soldier in the region and took part in putting down the revolt. Even after fifty years, he would cry telling us that he had to kill a Kurdish woman. He still had the weight on his conscience. As an individual, even if I cannot change the world, I am doing my best to keep my thoughts, discourse and praxis integrated and live accordingly as much as possible. It was also an option not to make the objection public and survive within the cracks of the system as a soldier fugitive but I wanted everyone to know that they should not count on me when making some 'sacred' plans.

What do the concepts like nation, homeland, citizen mean to a conscientious objector ?

In my understanding, nation includes all the creatures living around the world. Being on top of the food chain, we consider ourselves the owner of the world. As for homeland and citizen, I see them as the vehicles of the official ideology. I do not adopt these concepts as I think that they will entail an infinite number of demands such as obligation, commitment and a recipe on how to live. We should fight against them.

Last January, at the Conscientious objection Conference held in Bilgi University, we had the opportunity to listen to the experiences of conscientious objectors from different countries. What can you say about the situation of conscientious objection activists in Turkey in comparison to their counterparts in other countries ?

The activists in the countries which took conscientious objection as a basic human right with the liberatory wind of the 60s are naturally in a different position. Yet, I can tell that we show similarities with the activists in Greece and Israel. We experience the same difficulties in terms of reaching masses, organization and support but the organization of the activists in those countries is more pervasive and institutionalized. Recently, the fact that conscientious objection supporters are faced with lynch and courthouse raids have

shown what kind of a taboo military is. Furthermore, in Turkey there is a crime entitled 'disinclining the public off the army' which poses a threat to activists.

Is each conscientious objector an activist at the same ?

In my opinion, each conscientious objector is an activist in his/her life milieu. Contentious objection movement has been trying to express itself for 20 years in Turkey. Since objectors are people who announce their decisions publicly and do not hide, it is possible that they talk about conscientious objection with the people they meet sooner or later. I think that even the act of explaining what conscientious objection is in a plain language is related to activism. Among the anti-militarists there can be people who formerly took part in militarist structures, physically challenged people, women and gays who are not obliged to do military service.

Does being a conscientious objector or an anti-militarist activist affect your private life, the flow of your life in any positive or negative way ?

First of all I need to be cautious as I do not want to spend my life in prison. Like any other fugitive I face many hindrances in social arena and am being pushed to underground. I take the prevention of traveling as an abuse of my rights. The problems that I had with my family because of my objection are still continuing. The day after I made my objection public, my parents told me that they would commit suicide if I did not do my military service and they cried for days. That period was really tough for me as death appeared on both sides of the equilibrium. Then, I realized how deep the affects of militarist manipulation was on society. I am aware that I am just a fragile individual who puts a spoke in government's main mechanism. I know that any moment something to ruin or end my life might happen to me and I feel the terror of it from time to time. In spite of this, my effort to live my life not in the way the government defines but the way I believe eradicates that fear.

In Turkey, the family members and friends of young men who are going to do their military service send them off by throwing them in the air with the cheering "Our soldier is the greatest soldier".

Conscientious Objection Platform

vicdaniredplatformu chez gmail.com

www.savaskarsitlari.org