BOOKCHIN'S LIBERTARIAN MUNICIPALISM

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to present the Libertarian Municipalism Theory developed by Murray Bookchin. The text is divided into two sections. The first section presents the main precepts of Libertarian Municipalism. The second section shows how Bookchin's ideas reached Rojava in Syria and is influencing the political organization of the region by the Kurds. The article used the descriptive methodology and was based on the works of Murray Bookchin and field research conducted by the author over the years.

KEYWORDS: Murray Bookchin. Libertarian Municipalism. Rojava.

Introduction

The lifelong project of the American social theorist Murray Bookchin (1921-2006) was to try to perpetuate the centuries-old revolutionary socialist tradition. Born to socialist revolutionary parents in the Bronx, New York, he joined the international Communist movement as a Young Pioneer in 1930 and trained to become a young commissar for the coming proletarian revolution. Impatient with traditional secondary education, he received a thoroughgoing education in Marxism-Leninism at the Workers School in lower Manhattan, immersing himself in dialectical materialism and the labor theory of value. But by the time Stalin's Soviet Union formed a pact with Nazi Germany (in the summer of 1939), he cut his ties with the party to join the Trotskyists, who expected World War II to end in international proletarian revolutions. When the war

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ended with no revolution, many radical socialists of his generation abandoned the Left altogether.

But Bookchin refused to give up but instead sought to renovate leftist though it for the current era. In the 1950s, rather than abandoning the goal of replacing barbarism with socialism, he sought to rethink the socialist revolutionary project. He concluded that the new revolutionary arena would be not the factory but the city; that the new revolutionary agent would be not the industrial worker but the citizen; that the basic institution of the new society must be, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the citizens' assembly in a face-to-face democracy; and that the limits of capitalism must be ecological (BOOKCHIN, 1962). Moreover, modern technology was eliminating the need for toil (a condition he called "post-scarcity"), freeing people to reconstruct society and participate in democratic self-government.

He developed a program for the creation of assemblies and confederations in urban neighborhoods, towns, and villages that, at various points in this life, he called eco-anarchism, libertarian municipalism (BOOKCHIN, 1986) and communalism (BOOKCHIN, 2002). The goal of socialist movements in the late 20th century, he believed, must be to replace capitalism and the nation-state with a rational, ecological libertarian communist society, based on humane and cooperative social relations.

In the 1970s new social movements – feminism, antiracism, community, ecology – emerged that raised hopes for the fulfillment of this program, but they ultimately failed to generate a new revolutionary dynamic. Today, in 2015, the concept of radical citizens' assemblies is gaining new interest in the international Left. For this new generation, I propose to lay out the basic program as Bookchin developed it in the 1980s and 1990s.

Libertarian Municipalism

The ideal of the "Commune of communes," Bookchin (1971) argued to many audiences and readers, has been part of revolutionary history for two centuries: the ideal of decentralized, stateless, and collectively self-managed communes, or free municipalities, joined together in confederations. The sansculottes of the early 1790s had governed revolutionary Paris through assemblies. The Paris Commune of 1871 called for "the absolute autonomy of the Commune extended to all localities in France." (MANIFESTO OF THE PARIS COMMUNE, 1871). The major nineteenth-century anarchist think-

ers – Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin – all called for a federation of communes (BOOKCHIN, 1993).

Libertarian municipalism was intended as an expression of this tradition. Rather than seeking to form a party machine to attain state power and institute top-down reforms, it addresses the question that Aristotle asked two thousand years ago, the central problem of all political theory: What kind of polity best provides for the rich flourishing of communal human life? Bookchin's (1984) answer: the polity in which empowered citizens manage their communal life through assembly democracy.

The assembly, for Bookchin, was an ethical process as well as a political one, capable of empowering citizens politically as it was grounded in community life. According to the author:

> […] our freedom as individuals depends heavily on community support systems and solidarity. It is not by childishly subordinating ourselves to the community on the one hand or by detaching ourselves from it on the other that we become authentically human. What distinguishes us as social beings, hopefully with rational institutions, from solitary beings, presumably with minimal or no institutions, are our capacities for solidarity with each other, for mutually enhancing our self· development and creativity and attaining freedom within a socially creative and institutionally rich collectivity (BOOKCHIN, 1986, p. 249).

For Bookchin (1986), the city was the new revolutionary arena, as it had been in the past; the twentieth-century Left, blinded by its engagement with the proletariat and the factory, had overlooked this fact. Historically, revolutionary activity in Paris, St. Petersburg, and Barcelona had been based at least as much in the urban neighborhood as in the workplace. During the Spanish Revolution of 1936-37, Mingo, an anarchist member of the group Friends of Durruti had insisted that: "The municipality is the authentic revolutionary government. [...] the municipality, run by the workers, with economic policy supervised by the workers, could and should have stepped into the shoes of the State." (GUILLAMÓN, 1996, p. 29-30). Today, Bookchin (1986) argued, urban neighborhoods hold memories ancient civic freedoms and of struggles waged by the oppressed; by reviving those memories and building on those freedoms, he argued, we could resuscitate the local political realm, the civic sphere, as the arena for self-conscious political self-management.

Much of social life today is trivial and vacuous, he pointed out, in a modernity that leaves us directionless and uprooted, and living under nation-states that render us passive consumers. By contrast, libertarian municipalism, standing in the tradition of civic humanism, offers a moral alternative, placing the highest value on the active, responsible citizen participation. Politics, it insists, is too important to be left to professionals – it must become the province of ordinary people, and every adult citizen is potentially competent to participate directly in democratic politics. Assembly democracy is a civilizing process that can transform a group of self-interested individuals into a deliberative, rational, ethical body politic. By sharing responsibility for self-management, citizens come to realize they can rely on one another – and can earn one another's trust. The individual and the community mutually create each other in a reciprocal process. Embedding social life in ethical lifeways and democratic institutions results in both a moral and a material transformation (BOOKCHIN, 1991).

Where assemblies already exist, libertarian municipalism aims to expand their radical potential; where they formerly existed, it aims to rekindle them; and where they never existed, it aims to create them anew. Bookchin offered practical recommendations as to how to create such assemblies, which in 1996, in collaboration with him, I summarized in a primer, starting with self-education through study groups (BIEHL, 1996). The process may involve running candidates for elective municipal office on programs calling or the devolution of power to neighborhoods; where that is impossible, assemblies can be formed extralegally and strive to achieve vested power through moral force. In large cities, activists may initially establish assemblies in only few neighborhoods, which can then serve as models for other neighborhoods. As the assemblies gain real de facto power, citizen participation will increase, further enhancing their power. Ultimately city charters or other constitutions would be altered to legitimate the power of the assemblies in local self-government.

In a typical assembly meeting, citizens are called upon to address a particular issue by developing a course of action or establishing a policy. They develop options and deliberate the strengths and weaknesses of each, then decide by majority vote. The very process of deliberating rationally, making decisions peacefully, and implementing their choices responsibly develops a character structure in citizens – personal strengths and civic virtues – that is commensurate with democratic political life.

They come to take seriously the notion that the survival of their new political community depends on solidarity, on their own shared participation in it. They come to understand that they enjoy rights in their polity but also owe

duties to their community, and they fulfill their responsibilities in the knowledge that both rights and duties are shared by all. Reasoned civility is essential to a tolerant, functional, and creative democratic participation. It is a prerequisite for constructive discussion and deliberation. It is indispensable for overcoming personal prejudices and vindictiveness, and for resisting appeals to cupidity and greed, in the interest of preserving the cooperative nature of the community.

One thing direct democracy does not depend on is ethnic homogeneity: neither its practices nor its virtues are the exclusive property of any one ethnic group. On the contrary, a rational democratic polity provides a framework for embracing diversity. In its public spaces mutual understanding among people of different ethnicities can grow and flourish: its neutral procedures allow members of ethnic groups to articulate their specific issues in the give-and-take of discussion. In this shared context, people of all cultures may affirm their identity even as they achieve a common recognition of a general interest, especially based on environmental and communal concerns.

The assemblies' decisions, Bookchin (1991, 1996-2004) hoped will be guided by rational and ecological standards. The ethos of public responsibility could avert the wasteful, exclusive, and irresponsible acquisition of goods, ecological destruction, and human rights violations. Citizens in assemblies could consciously ensure that economic life adheres to ethical precepts of cooperation and sharing, creating what Bookchin (1986) called a moral economy as opposed to a market economy. Classical notions of limit and balance would replace the capitalist imperative to expand and compete in the pursuit of profit. The community would value people, not for their levels of production and consumption, but for their positive contributions to communal solidarity.

To support democratic self-government, municipal political life would have to be rescaled to smaller dimensions; large cities will have to be politically and administratively decentralized into municipalities of a manageable size, into neighborhoods. The city's physical form could be decentralized as well. By decentralizing cities and rescaling technological resources along ecological lines, libertarian municipalism proposes to bring town and country into a creative balance.

Decentralization, however, does not presuppose autarchy. Any given individual community, for the means of life, needs more resources and raw materials than are contained within its own borders. Municipalities are necessarily interdependent, especially in economic life. Economic interdependence is a function not of the competitive market economy or capitalism, but of social life as such – it is simply a fact.

Organized cooperation is therefore necessary, and Bookchin (1989) argued that it takes the institutional form of a confederation, a lateral union in which several political entities combine to form a larger whole, such as the city or the region. (He was inspired in this respect by the confederal organization of the Spanish anarchosyndicalist Confederacion nacional del trabajo, or CNT.) In confederation, the democratized neighborhoods do not dissolve themselves but retain their distinct identity while interlinking to address their shared municipal or regional life.

The assemblies send delegates to a confederal council to coordinate and administer the policies that the assemblies have established, to reconcile (with base approval) differences among them, and to carry them out. The delegates are not policymakers but are accountable to the assemblies that chose them, and they are imperatively mandated, immediately recallable at the assemblies' discretion. The confederal councils exist solely for administrative and adjudicative purposes. Consciously formed to express and accommodate interdependency, and ensuring that power flows from the bottom up, they embody the revolutionary dream of a "Commune of communes" (BOOKCHIN, 1986).

The economic life that libertarian municipalism advances is neither nationalized (as in state socialism), nor placed in the hands of workers by factory (as in syndicalism), nor privately owned (as in capitalism), nor reduced to small proprietary cooperatives (as in communitarianism). Rather, it is municipalized – that is, placed under community "ownership" in the form of citizens' assemblies (BOOKCHIN, 1996-2004).

All major economic assets would be expropriated and be turned over to the citizens in their confederated municipalities. Citizens, the collective "owners" of their community's economic resources, formulate economic policies in the interest of the community as a whole. That is, the decisions they make would be guided not by the interests of their specific enterprise or vocation, which might become parochial or trade-oriented, but by the needs of the community. Members of a particular workplace would thus help formulate policy not only for that workplace but for all other workplaces in the community; they participate not as workers, farmers, technicians, engineers, or professionals but as citizens.

The assembly democracy would make decisions about the distribution of the material means of life among all the neighborhoods in a municipality, and among all the municipalities in a region, where it can be used for the benefit of all, according to the maxim of nineteenth-century communist movements "From each according to ability and to each according to need." Everyone in

the community would have access to the means of life, regardless of the work he or she was capable of performing. The assembly would rationally determine levels of need.

Economic life as such would be subsumed into the political realm, absorbed as part of the public business of the confederated assemblies. If one municipality tried to engross itself at the expense of others, its confederates would have the right to prevent it from doing so. Neither the factory nor the land could ever again become a separate competitive unit with its own particularistic interests.

Today, Bookchin (1971) long argued, productive technologies have been developed sufficiently to make possible an immense expansion of free time, through the automation of tasks once performed by human labor. The basic means for eliminating toil and drudgery, for living in comfort and security, rationally and ecologically, for social rather than merely private ends, are potentially available to all peoples of the world. In the present society, automation has created social hardships, like the poverty that results from unemployment, because corporations prefer machines to human labor in order to reduce production costs. But in a rational society, productive technologies could be used to create free time rather than misery. It would use today's technological infrastructure to meet the basic needs of life and remove onerous toil rather than serve the imperatives of capitalism. Men and women would then have the free time to participate in political life and enjoy rich and meaningful personal lives as well.

As more municipalities democratized themselves and formed confederations, they would become powerful enough to constitute a dual power to the state and to the capitalist system. The confederations, expressing the people's will, would constitute a threat to the state and to the capitalist system and would become levers for the transfer of power. Resolving this unstable situation could well involve a confrontation, as the existing power structure would almost certainly move against the self-governing polity. The assemblies, he believed, would have to create an armed guard or citizens' militia to protect their newfound freedoms.

In this respect, he followed the longstanding recognition by the international socialist movement that the armed people, citizens' militias as an alternative to standing armies, was a sine qua non for a free society. Bakunin, for one, wrote in the 1860s:

> All able-bodied citizens should, if necessary, take up arms to defend their homes and their freedom. Each country's military defense and equipment should be organized locally by the commune, or provincially, somewhat like the militias in Switzerland or the United States (BAKUNIN, 1866, p.10).

A citizens' militia is not merely a military force but also manifests the power of a free citizenry, reflecting their resolve to assert their rights and their commitment to their new political dispensation. The civic militia or guard would be a democratically organized, with officers elected both by the militia and by the citizens' assembly, and it would exist under the close supervision of the citizens' assemblies.

It is possible that armed confrontation would be unnecessary, Bookchin observed, as the very existence of the direct democracy could "hollow out" the state power itself, delegitimating its authority and winning a majority of the people over to the new civic and confederal institutions. The larger and more numerous the municipal confederations become, the greater would be their potentiality to constitute a dual power (to use Trotsky's phrase) or counterpower to the nation-state. Expressing the people's will, the confederation would constitute a lever transfer of power.

With or without an armed confrontation, power would be shifted away from the state and into the hands of the people and their confederated assemblies. In Paris in 1789 and in Petrograd in February 1917, state authority simply collapsed in the face of a revolutionary confrontation. So hollowed out was the might of the seemingly all-powerful French and Russian monarchies that when a revolutionary people challenged them, they crumbled. Crucially, in both cases, the ordinary rank-and-file soldiers of the armed forces crossed over to the revolutionary movement. Today too, Bookchin thought, it would be crucial for the existing armed forces to cross over from the side of the state to the side of the people.

Starting in the 1970s Bookchin sought to persuade anarchists to adopt a libertarian municipalist program, arguing that the ideal of collectively self-managed communes, joined together in confederations, was part of their history. But they rejected the idea, saying that municipal governments were nothing more than nation-states writ small, and there was nothing potentially liberatory about them. Bookchin didn't belong in their movement, he was told – he was a "square peg in a round hole."

In the 1980s as Green movements emerged in North America and Europe, Bookchin tried to persuade them to accept this program. But they were more interested in forming conventional top-down political parties. Feeling his powers failing, Bookchin retired from political life, hoping that sometime in the future a movement would emerge that would take seriously the idea of citizens' assemblies. Bookchin thought that the desire to preserve the biosphere would be universal among rational people; and that the need for community abided in the human spirit, welling up over the centuries in times of social crisis. As for the capitalist economy, it is little more than two centuries old. In the mixed economy that preceded it, culture restrained acquisitive desires, and it could do so once again, reinforced by a post-scarcity technology. The demand for a rational society summons us to be rational beings – to live up to our uniquely human potentialities.

The last book that Bookchin had authored before his death in 2006 was a history of such revolutions, with emphasis on the popular movements: *The Third Revolution:* Popular Movements in the Revolutionary Era (1996-2004). The book's title is the key to its meaning. The First Revolution is the preindustrial revolution, in which the people rebel against feudalism, as in 1789, when the French peasantry rose up against the aristocracy and monarchy. The Second Revolution is typical of the industrial age, the revolution of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The working class, as Marx described it, was exploited and when its misery became extreme, it would seize control of the means of production and create socialism. Both failed for numerous reasons, because bourgeoisie captured society's wealth, or vanguards created dictatorships in the name of the people.

The Third Revolution – the one Bookchin advanced – was the revolution of the people against dictatorships, a libertarian revolution against domination by the state and capitalism, but also against all social hierarchies, especially sexism and racism. The era of proletarian revolutions was over, he knew, and the new revolutionary agent would be the citizen; the arena of the revolution would be not the factory but the city, especially the urban neighborhood. New social movements – feminism, antiracism, community, ecology – were creating a new revolutionary dynamic. Modern technology was eliminating the need for toil, so that people would soon be free to participate in the democratic process. Hence his ideology of libertarian municipalism – the creation of face-to-face democratic institutions in urban neighborhoods, towns, and villages.

In this revolution, once again, people create democratic institutions – neighborhood assemblies and the councils – to empower themselves. But this

time they have learned the lessons of history and know the mistakes of previous eras. The assemblies become the institutions of the new society, and by confederating they wage a struggle against the forces of capitalism and the nation-state. For Bookchin, the Third Revolution was inspired by the anarchistic Spanish revolution of 1936-37.

Bookchin's ideas come to Rojava

In 2004, two years before Bookchin died, he received a letter from some intermediaries representing the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan, who had been convicted of treason in 1999 and was sentenced to solitary confinement in a lonely island prison in the Sea of Marmara called Imrali.

Back in the 1970s, Öcalan, child of a Turk and a Kurd, living in Ankara, gathered around himself a group of socialist radicals affirming the existence of a Kurdish ethnicity in Turkey and calling for self-determination for Kurds. (The Turkish state has long denied, violently, rights to all ethnicities except Turkish. Even affirming the existence of Kurds in Turkey is considered an act of "separatism" and hence "terrorism.") The Turkish state remained intransigent against Kurdish political activism, so lacking any peaceful recourse for Kurds, Öcalan and his friends went on to form the PKK in 1978. The group's ideology was Marxist-Leninist, and its goal, the creation of an independent Kurdish state. In 1984 the PKK and the Turkish state entered into an armed conflict, which still continues as I write and which has been extraordinarily brutal on the Turkish side.

In 1991, after the end of the Soviet Union, Öcalan and the PKK realized that the movement had to respond to the historical moment and reassess its goals. In 1999, after his capture, he used his public trial to call for the democratization of the Turkish republic, so as to ensure every citizen, regardless of ethnicity, the right to participate equally in Turkish political life. His call was ignored, and he was convicted of treason and sentenced to solitary confinement.

Permitted visits only by his lawyers for an hour a week, he asked them to bring him books on social theory, east and west. Öcalan studied them and was soon generating manuscripts based on his thinking. Among the books sent to him were several by Murray Bookchin, translated into Turkish.

Reading Bookchin's works, Öcalan seems to have recognized in its author a kindred spirit. In 2002, in his prison notes, he wrote of one of Bookchin's books, "I recommend this book for the municipalities." He asked for more, and

soon it became clear that he was working on "a paradigm change" based on social ecology (ÖCALAN *apud* JONGERDEN; AKKAYA, 2013, p.176).

In 2004 two intermediaries wrote to Bookchin, conveying Öcalan's interest in his work and soliciting an exchange of ideas. During the brief correspondence that followed, they said Öcalan "emphasized that he thought he had acquired a good understanding of your ideas" and "spoke of himself as 'a good student' of yours." He "elaborates on the concept of an eco-democratic society and the practical implementation of libertarian municipalism in Kurdistan." And he said that "the Kurdish freedom movement was determined to successfully implement your ideas."[2]

A few days later, Bookchin wrote to the intermediaries: "I am pleased that he finds my ideas on libertarian municipalism to be helpful in thinking about a future Kurdish body politic […] My hope is that the Kurdish people will one day be able to establish a free, rational society that will allow their brilliance once again to flourish. They are fortunate indeed to have a leader of Mr. Öcalan's talents to guide them."

A few months later, on October 27, Öcalan wrote again in his prison notes, "For the municipalities, I suggested that Bookchin must be read and his ideas are practiced." On December 1, he wrote, "The world view for which I stand is close to that of Bookchin," and recommended that his adherents read *Urbanization and Remaking Society* (JONGERDEN; AKKAYA, 2013).

Öcalan went on to develop a base-democratic program for the Kurdish movement and over time the PKK agreed with his recommendation. In March 2005, he issued the "Declaration of Democratic Confederalism in Kurdistan":

> I have already addressed the point that the local level is the level where the decisions are made. However, the thinking leading to these decisions needs to be in line with global issues. We need to become aware of the fact that even villages and urban neighbourhoods require confederal structures. All areas of the society need to be given to self-administration, all levels of it need to be free to participate (ÖCALAN, 2011, p. 27).
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> Democratic confederalism is based on grass-roots participation. Its decision-making processes lie with the communities. Higher levels only serve the coordination and implementation of the will of the communities that

[2] This correspondence is published online at Akbar Shahid Ahmed, "America's Best Allies Against ISIS Are Inspired By A Bronx-Born Libertarian Socialist," **Huffington Post**, December 18, 2015. Available in: https://www.huffpostbrasil.com/entry/syrian-kurds-murray-bookchin_n_5655e7e2e4b079b28189e3df. Access on: 2 Aug. 2019.

> send their delegates to the general assemblies. For limited space of time they are both mouthpiece and executive institutions. However, the basic power of decision rests with the local grass-roots institutions. (ÖCALAN, 2011, p. 33).

These democratic institutions would spread, he proposed, so that all of Turkey would undergo democratization. The assemblies would then cross national borders, bringing democratic civilization to the region and producing not only freedom for the Kurds but a democratic confederal union throughout the Middle East.

When Bookchin died in July 2006, the PKK assembly saluted "one of the greatest social scientists of the 20th century," saying that Bookchin "showed how to make a new democratic system into a reality." The resolved to "put this promise into practice this as the first society that establishes a tangible democratic confederalism."[3]

Bookchin emphasized repeatedly in his later years that for a revolution to succeed, history on must be on its side. Success is not possible at every moment; in addition to the will of individuals, large social forces must also be at work. But too often, when a revolution is on the horizon, people are not ready for it. At "revolutionary moments," as Bookchin called them, when a social or political crisis explodes, people pour into the streets and demonstrate to express their anger – but without the existence of revolutionary institutions to embody an alternative, they are left wondering what to do. By the time a revolutionary moment occurs, it is too late to create them.

It is impossible to predict, Bookchin insisted, when social crises will take place, so emancipatory institutions must be consciously created well in advance of the revolutionary moment, through painstaking, molecular work. He urged his students, to begin to create the institutions of the new society within the shell of the old, so that they will be in place at the time of crisis.

The architects of the Rojava Revolution understood this point clearly. In the early 2000s, even as the brutal Assad regime proscribed political activity, the women's union *Yekitîya Star* and the PYD began organizing clandestinely, in accordance with the new PKK ideology of Democratic Confederalism. In March 2011 the Syrian uprising began, allowing for more overt organizing, and they plunged ahead full force: The People's Council of West Kurdistan (MGRK) created councils in neighborhoods, villages, districts, and regions.

[3] "2006: PKK's Salute to Bookchin," posted at Biehlonbookchin.com (2015). Available in: http://www.biehlonbookchin.com/pkk-salute-bookchin. Access on: 2 Aug. 2019.

Citizens poured into these alternative institutions, so much so that they a new level was created, the residential street, which became the home to the commune, the true citizens' assembly. By the time Rojava's revolutionary moment occurred in July 2012, when the Assad regime evacuated, the process had been under way for over a year, and the groundwork had been laid: the democratic council system was in place and had the support of the people (KNAPP, FLACH, AYBOGA, 2016).

Since July 2012, Rojava has become the epicenter of popular desires for radical democratic change. Like Paris in 1789, St. Petersburg in 1905 and 1917, and Barcelona in 1936-37, it crystallizes an era's aspirations for social and political revolution. The next challenge will be not only to survive in the war against the jihadists, but to ensure that power continues to flow from the bottom up. For the rest of the world, the Rojava Revolution offers an important lesson about the need for advance preparation. While Western activists often face repression, they face nothing like the brutality of the Assad dictatorship, and they have the relative freedom to begin to create new institutions now. Had Bookchin lived to see the Rojava Revolution, he would surely have considered it emphatically part of the Third Revolution.

A clear choice

The nation-state and the capitalist system cannot survive indefinitely. Around the world, the divisions between rich and poor have widened into a yawning chasm, and the whole system is on a collision course with the biosphere. Capitalism's grow-or-die imperative, which seeks profit for capital expansion at the expense of all other considerations, stands radically at odds with the practical realities of interdependence and limit, both in social terms and in terms of the capacity of the planet to sustain life. Global warming is already wreaking havoc, causing rising sea levels, catastrophic weather extremes, epidemics of infectious diseases, and diminished arable land.

To Bookchin, the choice was clear: either people would establish a democratic, cooperative, ecological society, or the ecological underpinnings of society would collapse. The recovery of politics and citizenship was thus for him not only a precondition for a free society; it was a precondition for our survival as a species. In effect, the ecological question demands a fundamental reconstruction of society, along lines that are cooperative rather than competitive, democratic rather than authoritarian, communal rather than individualistic – above

all by eliminating the capitalist system that is wreaking havoc on the biosphere (BIEHL, 2015).

The demand for a rational society summons us to be rational beings – to live up to our uniquely human potentialities and construct the Commune of communes. In many places, he argued, old democratic institutions linger within the sinews of today's republican states. The commune lies hidden and distorted in the city council; the sectional assembly lies hidden and distorted in the neighborhood; the town meeting lies hidden and distorted in the township; and municipal confederations lie hidden and distorted in regional associations of towns and cities. By unearthing, renovating, and building upon these hidden institutions, where they exist, and building them where they do not, we can create the conditions for a new society that is democratic, ecological, rational, and nonhierarchical. Hence the slogan with which he closed so many of his inspirational orations: "Democratize the republic! Radicalize the democracy!"

O MUNICIPALISMO LIBERTÁRIO DE BOOKCHIN

RESUMO: *O presente artigo tem o propósito de apresentar a Teoria do Municipalismo Libertário desenvolvimento por Murray Bookchin. O texto está dividido em duas seções. Na primeira apresenta-se os principais preceitos do Municipalismo Libertário. Na segunda seção demonstra como as ideias de Bookchin chegaram até Rojava na Síria e está influenciando a organização política da região pelos Curdos. O artigo utilizou-se da metodologia descritiva e se baseou nas obras de Murray Bookchin e nas pesquisas de campo realizadas pela autora ao longo dos anos.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: *Murray Bookchin. Libertarian Municipalism. Rojava.*

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