

# Is a Revolutionary Approach to Politics in Britain Possible?

Lessons from Rojava #1

18th of May, 2020

### **In This Episode**

On the 18th of May, 2020 the Kurdish Solidarity Network - Education Working Group began the online seminar series Lessons from Rojava: How our Social Movements can Learn from the Rojava Revolution.

This first session had the broad theme 'Is a Revolutionary Approach to Politics in Britain Possible?', and included a brief overview of the Kurdish Freedom Movement's history and development from KSN organiser Nik Matheou, a discussion with Elif Sarican from the Kurdish Women's Movement on organising in the UK, and two videos from internationalist and KSN organiser Viyan on her experience in Rojava and reflections for organising in the Irish and British isles. The session ended with questions to the three participants, before some music from the persecuted Turkish and Kurdish socialist band Grup Yorum.

### **Podcast Platforms**

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<https://youtu.be/0y6kaYCR6EA>

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**Ida:** Welcome to this first of five seminars organised by the Kurdish Kurdistan Solidarity Network. My name is EDA and I'm an organizer with the Kurdistan Solidarity Network. And the series is called lessons from Rojava. How are social movements can learn from the Rojava Revolution and the aim of these sessions is to inspire, strengthen and energize social movements in our contexts. And you can find all of the information. On the Kurdistan Solidarity Network website and on our Facebook page as well point. So what we'll be talking about tonight. Is what it means to call ourselves revolutionaries. What does radical system change look like in the places that we live in and what the role of education is in our political struggle? And we'll be hearing from our friends in the Kurdistan Solidarity Network and in the Kurdish women's movement about the history of the Kurdish Freedom movement, about the challenges we face and what we can learn from the logical revolution and the politics of the wider Kurdish freedom movement. And 1st we'll start by hearing from Viyan, who's going to talk about her experiences in Rojava. And after Bian, Nick will be talking about the history of the Kurdish Freedom movement. So we'll be watching a video that Leanne has recorded for us. And thank you again for joining us. I hope you all have a very educational evening and we'll hear now from the young.

**Viyan:** Hi everyone I'd like to welcome everyone who's joining us for this session. Whether you're fighting for decades or whether you're a more of a newcomer to the struggle. So we're all here because when we look at the world, we want to see things that change and whether we feel. Anger or compassion or grief or hope when we're looking at the world around us, we all know that a better world is possible, and we feel called to fight for it. So thank you for joining us in trying to answer some questions about how we do that. So I'd like to start exploring the question of is a revolutionary approach in Britain possible? We have a little bit about where I've come from and how I got to the path I'm on. Now. So I've been involved in radical grassroots organizing in the UK for around a decade and a half and for the. First few years. Like many of us, I was incredibly. Excited and inspired and hopeful and just really in love with the work I was doing. But as many of you know, like after a while all the groups and campaigns I was involved in dissolved or exploded due to internal politics. Failure to reach our goals or just, you know, people dispersing to fight for new or sexier issues or follow their careers or other commitments. So although I stayed involved in political organizing, I was often. Doing it with my head and not my heart, and I was doing it because I felt like it was necessary and not because I really

felt like it was possible. So early in 2018, I found out that an old friend of mine, Anna Campbell, had travelled to Rojava, in northeast Syria to join the revolution there, which was fighting for a grassroots democracy, women's liberation and ecological sustainability. A few weeks after I found out that she was there, Anna was killed by a Turkish air strike while defending against the invasion of. Your friend. And her death really shook me. Not only because I lost someone who I really loved and cared about, but because it made me realize how much I myself had lost the ability to believe in something so hard that I was willing to risk my life for it so soon after Anna died, I felt in my gut that I had to go to Rojava. And I felt the need to connect with the struggle that meant so much to her. I also really wanted to learn from the lessons that we could get from Roseville and bring them back to social movements in the UK and also to a certain extent, like pick up where she left off and keep on fighting in her memory. So I arrived in Rojava not really knowing what to expect and for the first six months I was involved in some ecological projects and also attended several weeks of educational courses for internationalists who had joined the work of the revolution in Rojava for the second-half of my time it became clear that Turkey was about to launch another invasion. So I joined the Media Center. So I could help with the press and information works and I continue to work in that press center as Turkey invaded in October, I came back from the UK a couple of months ago and. Now I'm trying to communicate some of the things that I learned over there and reconnect with social movements here. So it goes without saying that going towards that was one of the hardest experiences I've ever been through. But it was also one of the most healing experiences I've ever lived as well from when I first arrived. And I laughed. I started to feel hope and the possibilities of fundamentally transforming the world. To an extent, that hope came from what I was seeing around me. One really significant thing was being surrounded by women of all ages who called themselves revolutionaries, who were at the forefront of the revolution, either as military commanders or diplomats, heads of assemblies, community organizers, mothers and grandmothers. And being surrounded by women who had devoted their lives to the movement from teenagers to elders made me realize how much we're missing them in the UK and how the wisdom and energy of all the women are so often. So it made it possible for me to envision myself committing to this the rest of my life, and to reject that tired narrative of, like, radical politics being just for the very young, or the very deluded, and instead to stand shoulder to shoulder for the rest of my life with the women who have been like through hell. And back again and still held an unshakable belief in humanity and what we can accomplish when we're working together. So I also recognize, though, that the hope didn't come just from what I was seeing, but also came from inside me. And I had transformed and I started to think of myself as a revolutionary. So what is a revolutionary? It's definitely a word that we have a lot of discomfort with in the UK for a lot of reasons, and it's definitely not a word that I would have used to describe myself in the past. Not that it was a bad thing, but it's something that I would always use to describe other people and not myself. But I think it's really important that we shift to understanding of it and see a revolutionary not as someone who emerges from a revolution that's taking place, but to instead see revolutions as a product of revolutionaries. And of social movements that have a revolutionary approach to political organizing. So how can we develop this revolutionary approach in a place like? The. UK the UK in many ways is the core of capitalism of imperialism, of state and border fascism, so surely it's the last place where we can talk about revolution. But there's no idea in the Kurdish freedom movement that in every place and every time there are seeds of liberation of democracy. Of communities and resistance, and to be revolutionary means to align yourself with these instances. These tendencies, at the same time as also fighting the things that we are. So we do this by knowing our histories so we can connect to our heritage and if we want to shape our future, we need to know our present. And you can only understand your present if you know your history. We also do it by deepening our understanding of what we're fighting for so we can hold the political clarity that we need. To make good choices while we navigate the difficult decisions and compromises that we need to do as we politically. And we also do it by rooting our political action and our whole lives in love for the people we organize, with love for ourselves and where we come from, and also the people who have helped us grow. It's also about love for freedom, love for the natural world we live in and for the

humanity and communities that we're fighting for. Or also rooted in love for the social movements have come before us and the people in them who have been killed or imprisoned. This is why friends from a movement give internationals a new name when we arrive in Rojava. The name of a revolutionary who's been killed in the struggle. And that's to make sure that they are remembered and that we know that our work is made possible by what they gave to the struggle. And once you're given the name of a revolutionary, the least that you can do is to strive to be a revolutionary yourself and to continue the work in whatever way is necessary, whether it's by doing media work, planting gardens, self-defense, or political education.

**Nik:** Now that Viyan set out some of the some of the key themes that we're going to be approaching in this in this not only in this webinar but also in the subsequent webinars, I'm going to give a bit of an outline of the history of the movement and that really picks up from what Diane was saying at the end there. It's only through knowing the history of struggles for freedom in general, and then the struggles for freedom in our own time. In place, and the particular struggles for freedom that we're looking to learn from that, we can start to situate ourselves as people who want a different world as revolutionaries in the current moment. And we can start to build up an image of where we really want to go. And I think that it's particularly important when we're looking to apply the the ideas of a movement in our own context that we understand clearly where it comes from in its context, the history of the Kurdish freedom movement. As I'll turn to shortly, it really demonstrates the richness of its tradition and the dynamism. In its development. But it also shows how it's a tradition that develops global understandings of what it means to create a free life. Global understandings of what liberation can look like. And in this the movement is very conscious. In saying we have learned from the world's traditions, we've developed our own, and now we are looking to learn together. And teach these back to the world so that we can participate and we can develop it further. And I think that's particularly important so that we don't get stuck in an idea that what we're trying to do is to recreate the movements on development in our own context as well. We have our own particular situation and the way in which revolutionary organizing looked here and the way in which it looked when the movement was first developing. And the Kurdish Freedom movement today are all very different. So by understanding their the the history and the development, we can try to start our own traditions. But don't just try to artificially recreate the movements origins, but really learn from these and develop altogether. So a bit of background then is of course the history of Kurdish oppression in Turkey, from the establishment of the Turkish Republic in the early 20s, to name yourself occurred, was illegal to speak. Kurdish was firstly systematically excluded and then made illegal because the Turkish nation. States took the perspective of all nation states to its logical extreme. The only people who can live in the nation state of Turkey are Turks. If you have a Turkish passport, you have to be Turks. So from this from this history, there were a number of different rebellions, and obviously this history also has a prehistory in the exclusion of Armenians and Greeks, and eventually genocides that took place in the late Ottoman Empire. But the history of the Kurdish freedom movement, while it has this background of ethnic and national oppression in Turkey, really emerges from the moment in the late 60s when the whole world was experiencing a revolutionary struggle, a revolutionary. This is summed up in the sort of year 1968, particularly the events in France, but it's but 1968 stands in for a number of years here from slightly earlier with the Cultural Revolution in China to slightly later to the hot years in Italy and the upswing of the revolutionary left in Turkey. And it's really in this Crucible, in this period of revolutionary struggles, feminists struggles, workers movements, students not least that the Kurdish freedom movement starts to come together. It was founded by a figure called Abdullah Ujaan, whose affectionately known in the movement as Apple, and his early followers. His friends were known as the followers of Apple, the apology. And Abdullah Jalan and his friends followed the rest of the Turkish New Left, particularly 33 key figures that you got him kopaka Mahir Chayan and Denis Geschnitten and supported the organisations that they that they established and organised demonstrations. After these three figures were successfully imprisoned. And executed or tortured to death. But although this was a broad revolutionary struggle that was taking off in this moment of struggle, that was all everyone was focusing around the ideas of Marxism, Leninism as

the way in which you could create a free and liberated life. The apple Gee, the Kurdistan Revolutionaries as they were starting to be known, we're taking a slightly different perspective. They still believed that the revolution in Turkey was really essential, but they began to take an analytical perspective. That said that Turkey will never be free unless Turkey's colony Kurdistan is for. So if we want a revolution in Turkey that necessarily has to pass through the revolution in Kurdistan, and that's an important point because although it's the Kurdish freedom movement, the Kurdistan Freedom movement, there have been non Kurds who participated in it from the start, from the get go. But not only is Kurdistan Turkey a colony of Turkey, Kurdistan is a colony of four different nation states, Syria, Iran and Iraq. So the revolution in Kurdistan is a revolution for the whole of the Middle East in fact. And that's the perspective that's there. Right from the beginning. Towards the end of the 70s, there was a really heavy oppression and a lot of violence between the right and the left in Turkey, and the movement took the position at this point to start formalizing its organization. But very soon after they did that in 1978, there was a new coup in Turkey, and Turkey has a long history of military coups going back to 1960. There are four in the post war period. So there's a Turkish military coup and many of the movements leaders have to go into exile, into Syria and into Lebanon, and a number of others are imprisoned in Turkey, where they begin the what's known as the movements first big resistance, the prison resistance in the albuquer or the Kurdish. Ahmed in the early 80s and particularly a number of hunger strikes there. The movement grew and developed over the 80s and into the early 90s, but it continued in this period as a Marxist Leninist movement. But I think it's important to emphasize that it was always a fairly unique Marxist Leninist movement. So Marxism Leninism is the official ideology of the old Soviet Union. It was the idea that you would. Create a one party state based on a Leninist party, and this one party state would take charge of building socialism and once socialism had been built, the state would begin. And to disaggregate would begin to wither away so-called and a new phase of freedom where people were able to choose and develop as they wanted, known as communism would come about and all of the anti colonial liberation movements really the, the, the most radical ones, certainly in the 60s and in the 70s into the 80s were Marxist. Feminist. And the movement was no different. But already in the early 80s and then especially into the 90's, the movement began to reassess its commitment to this particular paradigm to this particular worldview and approach to building a free life. For one thing, they started to see the problems in the Soviet Union. Already in the 80s, there are discussions of the problem of trying to build socialism based on a state when a state is necessarily going to be in an institution that tries. To control people. Then from the late 80s and into the early 90s, there was a really dramatic growth of participation of women in the movement and particularly young women. Now women have played a role in the Kurdish Freedom movement and anti colonial liberation movements in general for a long time. But the role of young women's leadership and the dynamism that they brought into the movement. Really began to show itself in the late 80s and in the early 90s. And all this came together in a process that took place across the 90s. Then in a very different context to the movements birth in the 70s, when it had seemed that Marxism Leninism was on the cusp of a world victory. In the 90's, the so-called end of history, the victory of liberal capitalism, the situation was very different and the movement began a long period of assessing the failures of itself, its own practice, and also the failures of Marxism, Leninism in general and the traditions of state socialism. Which had come in the end to more or less nothing. They had allowed the reestablishment of capitalism, the real establishment of all the oppressive systems that the Russian Revolution and Chinese revolutions had emerged to try and replace in the. First place. And they came by the end of the 90s to a few key positions that were central to what emerged in the early 2000s. What's known as the new paradigm, which is the new paradigm for socialism and a free life to replace the old paradigm for the same goal. Socialism in a free life. Which had been Marxism Leninism. And in particular. The new paradigm was based on some key principles that have come gonna come up again and again in the subsequent seminars, both today and in coming weeks. So 1 is a real recognition that building socialism is not a technical or an economic task. As such, it's a task of liberation. It's a task of freeing humans and freeing humanity. Already in 1998, Abdullah Jalan was writing a text saying our goal is the liberation of the human. Now, what that

means is that personal change and system change have to go hand in hand, and this is really shown in sucking agencies. The first one of the first organizers of the women's movement, saying that the real strength of this movement is the is shown in the way that it can build new personalities. And there's a quote here that I really like. This movement addresses the essence of being human in all our debates, our educations and discourses, humanity and human values are the starting point. So this idea of person change and system change has to be there. In essence, the second is that struggling for a state in order to then use that state to build a free humanity doesn't make sense. The state is here. It's a fact. We have to figure out how we can build a free life. With the existence of the state already having come into being, but we can't fall into the trap of thinking that the state itself is going to be the vehicle for our liberation. And so the movement started to discuss the role of democracy and what democracy could really mean, what the control of people over their everyday lives actually looks like. The literal meaning of *democratia*. The role of women from the late 80s and the early 90s in the in creating the dynamic growth of the movement was also recognised and the movement started to. Ask the question so if you can't get rid of capitalism without getting rid of the state, what is the state itself based on and patriarchy began to become the obvious answer. So personal change and system change take place, not least through overcoming patriarchy and the leading role of women in oppressed genders. Struggle. And finally, looking at the experience of Kurdistan under the oppression of the Turkish state. Ecology was appreciated as central to any revolutionary project, particularly after Abdullah Ocalan was imprisoned in 99 and started to read the works of social ecologist Murray Buchan. So in prison, Abdullah Ujaan presented his defense writings to the movement, and in these presented to the new paradigm. And it's this new paradigm which has been first put in place in North Kurdistan, or SE Turkey in Baku, and we'll be hearing from a number of organizers in Baku in these. And has also since 2012, since the beginning of the Syrian revolutions and the emergence of Rojava has also been put into practice in Rojava. Now it's not a road map. What Ulan sets out for us? It's not a paint by colours, it is a proposition for. How we can build a few? Life. And so what's going on in Rojava and what's going on in Baku isn't exactly just putting it into practice, but it's figuring out what it looks like in practice in that moment, given that development. Our challenge is to start thinking about what that would look here. And to do that, I'll hand over now. To. Either and Ellis to discuss that.

**Ida:** Thanks nick. Hi elef.

**Elif:** Hi, Ida. How are you doing?

**Ida:** Alright. Thank you for joining us. It's really, really good to have you here, to everyone watching. I'll just do a quick reminder at this point that if you have questions, please put those in in the chat in the zoom chat or in the Facebook comments cause we're saving those for later. So you can still ask questions. So Leanne or Nick to answer later and obviously you can keep questions coming for Ellis as well throughout this this chat that we're gonna have now and somebody's asking if we'll release a recording of of this evening seminar we will be doing that. That's why we're recording it and it also I think. Leave. You go on on Facebook later. Because we're also streaming it live there. So tonight we're welcoming Elliff, who's an anthropologist, writer and an activist of the Kurdish women's movement, and she'll be joining us and sharing some of her expertise on a number of things. So I guess. The Anna and Nick have articulated really clearly. I think some of the kind of personal and society wide kind of tensions and contradictions that come up when we organise politically and I was just wondering if in order to like kind of ground this in, in what we're going through right now, which also gives us an idea of. What we're aiming to do with this whole five week curriculum, I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about what you think are some of the biggest challenges facing social movements in our context. So obviously that's partly here in England, Wales and Scotland, but also thinking about like a broader kind of neoliberal. Context, because obviously we now have people tuning in. From all over the world.

**Elif:** Yeah, I mean, very nice, easy question there. Thanks Peter. No worries. Firstly, thank you everyone for joining this meeting and thank you for all our friends at the Kurdistan Solidarity Network for putting so much work into organising this amazing five week. Curriculum I think it's been arranged,

organized and being like presented at a very, very crucial time. So thank you for that. and also I hope everyone who has joined is well and well as well as can be is safe because it genuinely is a one of the luxuries at the moment to obviously to have the ability and the. Circumstances to be able to stay safe during this time, I hope people are spending this time either in some like formation educating themselves or together, or if not possible self educating. But yeah, I mean I think you know, obviously we we most of us here well a lot of us here live in the UK and therefore we've been experienced in the last two months in a very specific way in terms of the many failures of you know this government. In terms of tackling the coronavirus pandemic, but also the failures of the system, you know that actually like, go beyond the government as well. and I think that's important to recognise because I do think that's also one of the challenges and for social movements in the UK is being able to escape the frameworks of, you know, capitalist States and so on. So I think that's certainly a crucial 1 and I think when we're talking about. The biggest challenges or challenges in the UK? They. You know, we're going through what we can call like. It's a moment of structural crisis and I guess, like, we could argue that it has been for a while and many sides are vying to shape the future, you know, from obviously the very extreme on the right to this, you know, outright fascists to, obviously. I guess, like revolutionaries and what will determine who and who, or like, you know the the people or the movements that or the efforts that will get to shape the future is really it really does come down to the method. And in which we approach the change that we're trying to achieve. And I think when we talk about social movements and therefore like progressives who, you know, understand actually the necessity of change, I think though, you know Vivian spoke about. It when? When? They spoke about the. You know the possibilities, and I think that's what we miss out on sometimes. You know, we understand that many things are necessary because we also experience things. But I think it's important to also be able to go beyond personal experience and be able to share understanding, you know, systemic and structural things and I think. I think, therefore, one of the I guess if we if there was like 1 sentence to say it is. And the biggest challenge that is being faced in the UK, and I suppose this probably applies to many other places, is creating a a synthesized methodological approach to how we combine the political, the interpersonal, the, the societal or and into societal. Necessary changes and transformations and how we do that all at the same time and not. One aspect of revolutionary changes not is not compromised for the other, and I think that's really important and it is possible. It's possible because you know Nick spoke about it and Brian mentioned certain things. It's already happened in the world. I mean, a lot of people have argued that a lot of them were, you know, especially in Roger. And it was a unique moment and it sure it was, but also there's many times there's many. There's many moments, particularly through the Kurdish freedom movement, that it wasn't necessarily the moment, but the possibility was created. And So what we've seen particularly in the UK in the last few years and now well since December as well since the recent general elections that I think a lot of the issues and failures and downfalls of political culture really came to the surface. I think first and foremost, one of the things that has really been exposed is that as. Was, I guess, like revolutionaries or progressives in the like in in like, you know, in absence of a better term, we really run the risk of losing the I guess the influence on culture we can have forever and. I think that's one of the things like the political culture in terms. Means of being able to speak to people, but also in internally within social movements. You know, there's there's insane levels of fragmentation, but not fragmentation in terms of autonomy, which you know obviously could be welcomed in some degree, but fragmentation, there's the question of constant like discussion of legitimacy. You know many, many people and many groups that just simply don't accept each other. And there's a rejection constantly of things that are done. You know, there's many downfalls and many, many things that are done that are not enough or advocate. But there's constantly a complete rejection between movements and groups and organizations, which I think really needs to be overcome this. Doesn't mean compromising principles or also. Of course, and I think the most important thing, which is where I think if I must say so, that the Kurdish movement can really make an intervention, is that there isn't a systematic, systemic approach to the question of women's liberation and creating an ecological society or system. As in exactly at the same time, even these approaches are fragmented and you know there's the feminist. Movement

which you know has a bit of like seasoning of like environmentalism at times and. Then there's the Environmental movement. And then there is also the ecological movement that you know is seasoned again with like women's liberation here and there. But there isn't a common struggle that brings all of these necessary revolutionary. Changes together and I think you know that that's the thing and I think you know, even even many groups and organizations that. I mean to be against liberalism. I think for I think fall into the pitfall of trying to achieve, you know, non liberal anti liberal liberalism, anti liberalism changes through liberal through methods of liberalism. And I think that's one of the things that I you know. I don't think we can answer that here right now in this call, but I think you know these are some of the questions to raise and also the culture that's been created, which is obviously a result of. Like the methods of liberalism through a capitalism modernity like what we call capitalism, modernity is the individual is seen as, or society is sacrifice for the individual as an individual, and society are completely divorced from each other. You know, I mean, many people would know like especially. Like when? Like during, like Tumblr culture, where there was like the phrase of like, you know, \*\*\*\* what society thinks and like it doesn't. Obviously it doesn't mean we must accept every aspect or every part of society, but. There is a complete rejection of society and that means you know human beings and people are also atomized and therefore the individual is convinced that one can only free themselves if they reject society completely rather than, you know, together, transform it and you know, and therefore like, there isn't an understanding. That, like capitalist liberalism, is not the freedom of the individual. It proposes to me, but it's actually the art of human societies erosion. And I mean maybe what I've just said like made way for more questions than answers, but I think these are things that really need to be considered.

**Ida:** I think there's. I mean, yeah, there's loads and loads to touch on there and all of those are things that we'll. Be talking about. Over the next 5 weeks. But it's I think it's really interesting to hear you talk about kind of. These different tensions, so the kind of alienations that that we experience under under liberalism and under this kind of widely kind of enforced individualism in in which, you know, kind of different social movements, are alienated from each other. And also I think a lot of social movements are kind in some ways. Kind of alienated from society, kind of wider society. So a lot of social movements would kind of see themselves as separate from society. And also I think because you were saying, which I think you like articulated really clearly is the. The fragmentation of social movements as well into kind of single issue groups instead of having like a broader vision kind of combining these different analysis and practices into into kind of one coherent struggle. And I was wondering if you could just really shortly like touch a little bit more on that kind of? Billion nation and these different tensions in that.

**Elif:** Yeah. I mean, I think you know the. If there was the correct method for a general structural approach, you know I don't think that there's a inherent issue with having like, you know, groups or organizations like approaching or trying to tackle like, you know, specific or more focused. Issues the unfortunate reality is that where do, where do these organizations the efforts of these organizations that deal with like single issues or like you know more focused issues, where does it feed into? There isn't a general structural or structure that is? And working on transforming society our system and you know creating what we call democratic nation, which we which I'm sure will be like tackled more in later seminars. But yeah there is there it's that's that's the issue. It's this alienation. The individual, as we said, and you know, Vienna, Nick touched on it a bit, touched on it is you know there is there is the. It it's actually really bizarre to me because there is this, you know, the individual that is like more important than society and everything else in liberalism. But also there is there isn't a genuine like self critical culture either, even though there's such a focus on the individual. So that that is a bit bizarre. To me, but I think that's what's important is to be able to be like, therefore, like as an individual, be self critical and self critical in a way that is at. That is a. That is a that can contribute to society and a collective, but also as that collective be able to be have, like, have strong principles but not be dogmatic to the point where you can't transform throughout society and with society, but also understanding the. The sensitivities of the site you work with, and this is one of the things that



is you. Is really interesting to me that because I I've spent a lot of time doing a lot of work with, you know, a lot of left organizations and so on in the UK. But also I work with the Kurdish community through my work, in my capacity as like part of the Kurdish women's movement. And it's very different cultures, you know, because. When you're doing the work, for example within the Kurdish women's, you're dealing with society. It's not people who have already necessarily, I mean obviously some are but not necessarily being entirely convinced of you know, the like wider ideological paradigm that we speak of. But these are the people that you know that you can't leave behind it when you're when you're making these efforts. And it really changes the approach you have to revolutionary work you do because you can't have this culture of rejection. And of course there are red lines. There are certain things you just outright do not. Accept but also there is there is the culture created that there is a constant effort of transformation and you do this together rather than you know, this alienation of whether it's individuals alienated from a group, whether it's groups alienated from each other because there is a genuine understanding that we just simply don't have the luxury to. You know, cancel everyone that he just doesn't fit into what we want them to fit into.

**Ida:** Yeah. And I think I mean it all comes down to the question of obviously if you want to believe in, in the capacity of the world and society to change, you also have to be able to understand that individuals can change. And I think that there's a lot of tension around this question or kind of personal transformation as well in any illiberal. Context, because we're so used to thinking. About kind of. Criticizing ourselves and improving ourselves in the neoliberal framework in the framework of kind of only aspiring to kind of better ourselves for our own good and not not as. Kind of people who are struggling for a better world and trying to kind of create that change within ourselves as well. This has been. Super, super interesting and thank you so much. Elif, I just had one final question cause I don't want us to finish this on like a on like a really kind of hopeless note. So is revolution possible? In in the context that we're living in.

**Elif:** I mean, yes, if it if it's necessary. It's also possible. It definitely is. It doesn't mean it's ever gonna be easy. It doesn't mean it's happening overnight. I think if we all continue to understand that like the the transformation must happen in all areas of society. And we can really focus on a revolutionary culture, but also our relationship with each other, like interpersonal, but also our relation with ourselves. Well, and I think you know beyond all understanding that you know again like Ryan spoke about this and like it will definitely come up I'm sure in the like for the for in all the seminars is that we must approach everything we do with like a deep feeling of love. And I always say this and maybe this is a bit like intimate to maybe say to 100. And 20 people. But when the when I became politically active, I and the more I worked with the Kurdish women's movement or the Kurdish movement as a whole, I say this as in, as, as as many people as I can. I discovered ways of love that I didn't know were possible, and that when you wake up every day and you know that you're within a movement that is genuinely trying to change the world and you know that you have, you know, Havas, you know, which means like friends and comrades. You just it it it makes you fall in love all over again every single time with the work you're doing. So yeah, I guess the short answer is yes, but also it will take a long time in the UK.

**Ida:** I think that's fair. I think we're all in it for the long haul if we're gonna. Be in. It thank you so much, Elise. It's been so good to hear from you. And if people have questions for you, just put those in the chat because Elif will be here to answer those later as well. And this brings us really nicely.

**Elif:** Thank.

**Ida:** We had a second contribution from Viyan and Beyoncé Video is the last speaker contribution. So if you have any questions for Elif or Brian or Nick, now is the time to ask them. So either in the zoom chat or if you're watching on Facebook in the Facebook comments and we'll get to those after this.

**Viyan:** I'd like to start off by talking a little bit about what we need to develop a revolutionary approach in the UK. It's a much larger conversation, but for now I'd like to focus on hope, transformation and courage. There's a saying in the Kurdish freedom movement that the primary role of a revolutionary. Is to keep. The fire, burning both within yourself and with other people, and in many ways I came to

resolve a looking for hope, wanting to see something that would rekindle that fire inside of me, and after a couple of months I was really frustrated because it wasn't easy. I was in a political culture that I found really foreign. I was confronted, like everywhere in the world with interpersonal conflict and I was constantly being pushed out of my comfort zone. So eventually I realized that I had gone wrong because I had come to the job of wanting to be spoon fed hope to kind of consume it. But hope isn't something that anyone else can really hand to us. It's something that we need to work for. It's something that we need to build and nurture and defend so that it's able to survive whatever the world throws at. It comes with over expecting to collect hope and to gather tools that I could use to transform the social movements in the UK, but instead I was the one who was transformed and it made me realize that the most important tool we have is ourselves. It's our ability to hope, to learn and to fight together, and it's not something we can do alone. Hope is a collective project. We need to be collected, connected to others and draw strength from each other. And even if you're not physically in the same same time or place to feel like you're fighting alongside each other and you're part of the. Bigger. Movement when we're organized, when we know that we're fully committed to each other and to the struggle. And when the movement is integrated into our lives in the holistic way, then we can fight harder and more sustainably and also more joyfully. For me, a lot of burnout I've experienced is when I felt alone like what I was working on was cut off from the past or future and it was just a bit of a dead end. And I was isolated. So again, it's a collective. Project as much as we build it up on ourselves, we must also help each other build it up. Hopes not like an abstract, fluffy feel. Good concept by changing what we think we're capable of, we change what we're actually capable of and we change what possibilities exist in the world. And through this we can see beyond what we're fighting against and. Actually, imagine the kind of world we want to live in and start building it up. So that comes the transformation. Hope depends on a belief in change in the potential for transformation and the ability of ourselves and others to learn. And to grow. If we want to believe that systems and structures can change, then we need to believe that people can change as well. In the UK we have a strong analysis of how systems of oppression. Such as racism. Patriarchy can influence our mentality and our behaviors, and how we internalize a lot of oppressive mentalities is also something that we're aware. Of but something that a lot of us here are working on as well is what the next step is. How do we liberate our minds from these influences? How do we walk the long, hard path of personal transformation, and how do we support other people to do that in a way which balances compassion with also like our ethics and what we believe in? So no one has all the answers to this, but for me it's clear that we need to base our practices and a belief that people can change and the commitment to really deep and long term learning. Recognizing the importance of learning and transformation for ourselves and for others gives us the patience that we need for the long, hard Rd. that we're walking. It also strengthens our ability to walk alongside those who we disagree with on some issues and to not see the world in a binary of people who agree with me. And the people who I'm against. But to see more clearly who we are actually fighting against and who we can walk alongside. So I'm talking about both the learning that comes through lived experience through learning from your mistakes through conversations, but also more structured education where we sit down and we learn about history. About ideas and about movements around the world. Because in order to transform ourselves and the world that we live in, we also need to transform the ideas that we're working with as well. So throughout through education, we develop our understanding in our heads, but also in our guts of what we fight for. We're able to build a vision that we can mobilize around and put our energy behind. So we don't just unite in order to fight against something, only to just dissolve. Whether we win or. Lose. If we. Unite to fight for something we can build movements which are strengthened by success and movements that can survive failure. And only if you know what you believe in will you have the courage and strength to fight for it. And I think this is really illustrated by the story of the battle of Kobani, about 5 or 6 years ago, which was the moment that a lot of the world started paying attention to what was happening in northeast Syria. So in 2015, as the Islamic State, like sees the city of Kobani, which is one of the epicenters of the version of. Revolution revolutionaries from across Kurdistan mobilized, and the city, and at this point the Islamic

State, had defeated and occupied a lot of land in Iraq and Syria and far larger forces had been defeated by it or had fled in front. And nobody expected resolvers. People's defensiveness to hold out against the force of ISIS, what they did, and they held out for months until the US was finally convinced to lend some air support. And from there, the People's Defence Unit and the Women's Defence units were able to claim the first significant defeat. Against Islamic State and it really marked a turning point in the battle against the caliphs. So the city of Kobane was absolutely devastated by the fighting, but has since been rebuilt except for one neighborhood which has been preserved. Exactly how it was at the end of the battle, in order to serve as a museum, as a memorial to all of those who fought and fell. So there's lots of absolutely destroyed, crumbling buildings, walls riddled. With bullet holes. And the rooms and the barricades from which the people's defence units waged the battle against ISIS are left untouched. So you've got leg jackets and scarves hanging up on the walls. You've got dirty frying pans still sitting on makeshift kitchens and sandbag barricades against the windows. And most of the walls are covered in writing with pain or kind of scratched in or with chalk. And there's a lot of slogans, like women, life in freedom, and we will be victorious. And there's also quite extensive quotations of the philosophy of the Kurdish freedom movement. And there's also names of friends who had fallen in battle or who were injured, and it took me a while to realize that, like one thing was missing from all of these inscriptions on the walls. And that was any slogans that were hateful or negative. There was no slogans. Against ISIS, there was no counts of how many jihadists anyone had killed. It was actually all incredibly. Like positive and hopeful. And of course, like the people fighting there, the fighters definitely felt rage. Our ISIS was doing and they understood more than most people in the world what was at stake and what was at risk if they were to lose against ISIS. But they chose to fill these rooms that they were fighting from. Many of them only armed with like a vintage ancient Kalashnikov, they chose to fill these rooms with hope, with love for the comrades and with the belief that they could do something that the rest of the world thought was impossible. And so this brings us to courage, because it's in knowing what you're fighting for and believing that it's possible that gives us the strength to keep on fighting. It gives us the strength not only survive, but to then heal and rebuild after the fights over. So. The fight for the better world isn't easy, and we do need strength and courage to do it and like hope, strength and courage are also collective projects. In the UK, even those of us who try to live and work collectively are often quite limited by the individualism which shapes our society, and this cuts us off from the collective care and support that nourishes us. It cuts us off from the energy that allows us to fight and to push ourselves and each other, and in order to build a revolutionary approach to political organizing in the UK. We need to build up this collective strength and courage and to commit to being the best we can be, not for ourselves before each other. So this means catching each other when we stumble, but also pushing each other forward when we lose motivation. In some ways I found it easier to be brave and strong and reasonable because you know that you're part of something huge and you know that the work that you. Do. Matters you have a real sense of mutual risk and mutual gain, and you know that all of your successes and failures will be collective in the UK. Our experience as individuals often take front and center. We ask ourselves if I give my time, my energy, my hope, my life to this, will it actually mean anything will make a different. And This is why we need to build political cultures which are based on love and collectivity and transformation, so we can draw strength from them, and we need to build organizations and movements which are long lasting and rooted in our communities and ambitious in our aims, because that gives us the courage we need to take more risks. So just as you don't become a revolutionary only when a revolution starts taking place, you don't stop being one after it's happened. In Roosevelt, the movement recognizes that in many ways the hardest work is yet to come. A revolutionary someone who never stopped struggling for what they believe in, whether they're in liberated territory, NE Syria, or in a very different context here. In the UK. We can't afford to not playing because we understand how destructive. The political and economic systems. Live in are in terms of loss of life, destruction of the natural world and destroying our ability to be human and live a dignified life. It is wise on the combination of the rest of the world. It can be hard to remember this, but we can and we must align ourselves with the people around the world who are fighting for a different kind of world

and listening, seeing how we're connected with movements both within the UK and around the world. It means honoring the struggle and the sacrifice of people in different places and times who have given their lives to this fight, and this gives us the strength to continue. And whether it's fighters and Rojava environmental campaigners in Latin America have been assassinated, anti racism activists in the US who have been killed by the police by the prison system by fascists, or countless others, we do walk this path alongside them and remembering those who have fallen in the fight. Freedom gives us that strength and courage and reminds us to never stop fighting. So before we conclude, in order to do that, I'd like to invite you to join me in a few moments of silence to remember those who have come before us and to honor the heritage of resistance that we're all part. Thank you for listening. And before I sign off, I'd like to leave you with a quote from Abdullah Ocalan, which I hope that will go some way towards answering in these sessions, which is what kind of world we want to live in. How do we get? There. And where do we start? Thank you.

**Ida:** Thank you, Viyan, for that video and we'll now take some questions for Viyan and Elliff and Nick.

So I'm taking. These out of. The chat and the Facebook comments and. Unfortunately, I think we've now got the number of questions that I won't be able to go through all of them. But we'll try to, you know, get quite a few in before we finish.

So first I've got a question for Ellis. What is force of? This policy to interact with other parts of Kurdistan in this revolutionary mission.

**Elif:** Thank you very much to whoever asked that question. I mean, I think it's an important one and it does come up quite a lot, particularly obviously within the Kurdish community as well. I think it's important to recognize the status I suppose of. Understand historically to be able to understand what I guess the policy or like the approach is to Kurdistan as. The whole, you know, Kurdistan is an international colony and it's colonized by 4 different nation states. You know Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. As many people know. And therefore the the freedom of Kurdish people as a nation will obviously not be achieved. Until the you know, until we are not colonized in all four parts of Kurdistan, of course. But this also means that. Where historically Kurdish people live. It's also home to many other peoples, right? And that's one of the beauties of the Middle East. That's one of the beauties of the region where we're from. There's not one pure nation or people that lives, you know, in a confined space like in a like a large confined space per say. So the approach is what we call and we like very briefly touched onto the democratic nation, which is. Which is a alternative. It's not post or anti per se, but it's an alternative to the nation state. So rather than creating a independent Kurdistan as a nation state and therefore creating new borders in, you know the the the lands that. Kurdish people have lived in for for centuries. It's so rather than creating new borders, the aim is to deem the existing borders obsolete. And therefore, actually the freedom of the Kurdish people will mean the freedom of all peoples of the region and, and therefore the freed our freedom. We're all invested in it. At the same time. Now, of course, there are very immediate issues to be able to achieve. What? What? The Kurdish Freedom movement has. Get out and that is obvious. Like the Kurdish people in general has a well, I guess that is with many particularly press nations, but there is really a there is a major issue currently of collaborating with the colonizers. And I think many people recognize this and we don't have time to. Go into it. But the Turkish state is one of the I we can say, is at the moment, the single most. Just like fascistic is existence in the in the way that is like a hindrance to not just Kurdish freedom, but freedom of all peoples in the Middle East, and therefore it's really important as a collective effort to oppose Turkish state fascism as much as. In every way we can, which means whether that's, you know, exposing collaboration with colonizers, whether. That's and and there is efforts as as we speak actually of creating a Kurdish unity on a platform of being able to come together and create a a joint program to be able to achieve a democratic nation. So I guess that's what the you know the the short answer or the brief of that would be. That. It is to. Create a democratic nation and to rather than creating new borders, is to deem the existing borders obsolete so we can all live together in freedom.

**Ida:** Thanks, that was beautiful. Really nicely pulled together at the end. I try super diplomatic. I think the next question will be for the Anne. If yeah. Ohh there we go. Now we can all see you. The there was a question I think I'm paraphrasing this a little bit, but somebody asked a question during your first contribution about the difference between activism and revolutionary activity. And I think there's also been more discussion in the chat. About the kind of. The like difficulty of of living in a in a context like like here in the UK where society is quite transient and people move around a lot and the kind of question of. How can like revolutionary organizing organizing strategies be implemented in in this kind of situation?

**Viyan:** OK, so both those are quite big questions also. First of all really sorry about all the wind noise in the video. It was very beautiful outside, but also quite windy. So hopefully you could understand me in answering that question. I want to make sure that we don't get. To cut up in sort of terminology like because I think that's something that we do quite a lot in the UK, we kind of jump on specific words, activist versus revolutionary. You know this versus that and to make sure that we really kind of look beyond that and think a little bit more into the meanings. So I guess instead of like answering the question of like, what's an activist versus a revolutionary, I'll talk a little bit more about, you know, how approaches to organizing in the UK, how they tend to manifest and some suggestions I would propose based on my experience is working with the Kurdish freedom movement. Well, I guess first of all, I think there's something really important about taking a very holistic approach, both in terms of how we bring ourselves into the organizing we do and also our analysis. Yes. So as Ellis mentioned, really making sure that we don't let things disintegrate into an issue by issue, by issue campaign when we should be having holistic analysis because we can't solve any of these problems without seeing how they relate to each other. You can't solve poverty without. Is looking at how capitalism destroys the entire. Meant and I think that's something that the Kurdish freedom movement has a really beautiful analysis of and looking how this sort of root of domination manifest in all of these different structures and systems. So they need to make sure that we push for that and push against this feeling like we need to make things very bite sized and self-contained. That people can can. Digest them or kind of stomach them and and put up with them. Because I think in general people do have instinctively a systemic understanding and I think that's kind of the background of actually why a lot of people don't get involved in politics because they think well, you know, why do I want the campaign on this issue when everything else is so messed up? And I personally get a lot more strength. Encourage kind of how I mentioned the video when I know that the little things I'm doing add up to a bigger picture. So for me that's like a revolutionary approach is having that holistic analysis and then also having the organization to make it a holistic form of action. It's also holistic in terms of how we bring ourselves into it. We don't see kind of ourselves first. You really learn to think of yourself as part of society as part of the movement and as part of this historical struggle as well. As was mentioned before, it's not that the individual Trump's everything, but you're actually able to put yourself a little bit in the back seat and see yourself to a certain extent in in service. And that's why we need, like a democratic, accountable, coherent, coordinated movement, because that's something that we can. Or feel not just OK with putting ourselves at the service of, but actually feel joyful about that and. And as as Ellis mentioned, really beautifully, it kind of opens the the way. Of. A new way of loving is loving, of being part of this movement. So it's really about, you know, challenging yourself and pushing yourself and really standing by your friends and your organizers. To for them to do the same thing as well, and not just saying, well, that's their business or if they want to, you know, drop off and not do something they can, they can do it, but actually like with love. Encourage each other. You know, push each other and finally the question about sort of transient completely that there is a lot of like long term community organizing that needs to happen and that takes years and it's never finished right? Like it's it's an ongoing process like the revolution is. Ever over and resolve, but they're still community organizing. They're still educating people. Just because the political systems have changed doesn't mean that the the revolution has stopped. And there's a full stop at. The end of it. So you need to do that community organizing, but it also needs to feed into something like a bigger picture. You need to have confederation.

You need to have structures and organizations which actually bring together all of these kind of locally based issues and channel them into something that's powerful enough to. Defend itself against, you know the state against capital. Them. And so that isn't necessarily meaning that everyone has to stay where they, you know, grew up in or they. Live for the rest of. Their lives. But having understanding that we need to be place based, so we also need to have this bigger horizon, this bigger vision. So it's not one or the other. You need to kind of combine them and I think. There's a lot of this. Practice and awareness developing in the UK and has been existing right from the beginning. We're not saying that UK is at level 0 for me. I'm really hopeful and excited about what's been happening in the UK and I. Think there's a lot of? Awareness of looking towards our society, our communities, but also looking towards these bigger things that bring us all together and I'm really yeah optimistic about how we can develop that tendency as we as we coordinate more.

**Ida:** Thanks, Leanne. That kind of really nicely also gives a small teaser for for next weeks. Seminar as well. And on that note I have, I think a final question and and I'm sorry to everyone who's asking questions still, I think we'll we'll have to start wrapping up soon, but I've got a final question which I think. Maybe Nick, you can start answering and then if we have time, it would be really nice to hear some of elephant beans thoughts as well, but also this touch. On the topic for next week's seminar, so we can also kind of keep it quite brief and and return to it next week. So working on the premise that the state is a vehicle for capital and cannot be a vehicle for liberation, how do we build material capacity for an effective alternative?

**Nik:** All the questions have been a nice simple 11 line answers, then thank you. That's a really great question. And yeah, echo everything you're saying. It's really great to have all these questions and all the friends joining us from, from near and far in these islands and and beyond. So I think on that. So there's two parts to that question, right, there's the the premise, which is if we assume that that the state is is a vehicle vehicle for capital for capitalism. For capitalists to command control, then what do we need to do to build up our material capacities and I guess material there in the sense of of, of an effective force, an effective power of our own or a counter power or community community power, however. You want to phrase that. So it's it's it's essentially the key question of of all revolutionary politics. But I think one thing that I would that I would emphasize just at the get go is that the premise isn't exactly the Kurdish freedom movements premise. So a lot of movements would say, including all the classic Marxist Leninist and state socialist. Movements that yes the the currently existing state. It. Is the capitalist state, and so you can't use that for liberation. You need to replace that with with a different kind of state. Classically, the sort of worker state as they understood. It. And it's that workers state which is going to, which is going to provide the vehicle for liberation. And and the Kurdish Freedom movement, one of its key developments, one of its key departures from the Marxist and Marxist Leninist tradition is to go this this focus on capitalism on the capitalist period or even the capitalist state, isn't it? Enough. We need an understanding, a historical understanding of the state in general. We need to understand what this form of human organization is in general and understand what its characteristics are. If we're going to start creating a different form of life and one of the key. Sort of historical perspectives that gets changed then from the from the mainstream Marxist 1, which would focus on either the last 200 years with industrialisation, maybe the last 500 years with colonialism and the merchant capital. State the Kurdish freedom movement in Abdallah Juan says no. We need to look at 5000 years of state civilization because if you look at it at that historical depth, then you can see that there are actually a lot of similarities in the way that ancient Mesopotamia and these state systems structured themselves in our current state systems. If the idea of shinily dressed men with a rose of other shinily dressed men behind them. In huge buildings reaching up into the sky, spouting incomprehensible stuff that somehow we all know has a really meaningful effect on how we're going to be able to live our lives. If that sounds familiar, then that's a familiar story for the vast majority of humanity living under state civilization for the last five millennia. So there's something there about the stating general that really needs to be centered in our analysis. It's not just that the current state is the is the state of capital or that the previous state was the state of feudalism or was the state of empires. It's that the state

form as such cannot create a vehicle for our free life, so the, the and the Kurdish freedom movements response is to then say but the state is a fact. It's a historical development that is here and in particular it's a historical development. In the last 5000. Is that's really got into our worldviews. That's really got into our sense of self and that's really started to define how we see humanity, how we see the potential in human society. It's very common the majority of the world probably believes that it is impossible to have a complex society that doesn't have a state, so that that that inability to believe in the potential of humans organized together is is, is a is a historical result of of of 55 millennia of. 5 millennial of oppression. And so to get on to the second part, then I think this emphasis on material, while important, we do need real material autonomy, material ways that we can organize ourselves. It has to go hand in hand with the ideological as everyone's been emphasizing throughout throughout this talk. If we if we give an example then so you say what sort of things would we would we need to organise to make sure that we can be independent of the state. One of the emphasis of the movement in the new paradigm in terms of building a cooperative economy, a socialist economy instead of current capitalist relations, is a real emphasis on cooperatives. And on the cooperative movement and on building up those cooperative forms of organization. But we all know what the cooperative movement. Insofar, it is really a movement. Looks like in much of the global north, right? It's it's often just a slightly nicer way of organizing your own exploitation for capital. And I don't mean that is to throw any shade or have a go at people who are organised in cooperatives. I have endless respect for that movement. But without that broader revolutionary ideology that makes sense of what you're doing in your individual cooperatives and in your individual enterprises. The revolutionary potential isn't there, so it's not really a question of whether cooperatives or not, it's about where cooperatives, for example, fit into a broader movement that is looking to build up our own capacities for self government. And really the key, I would say, and it's not exactly an answer. You know, hand over to Elif and beyond, then to to what their friend who was asking was really getting at, I guess you wanted some more concrete we can focus on this and we can focus. That. But, but I think it's important that that really. The. The difference between a revolutionary project and. A non revolutionary project can in the end only be 1 of mentality. It doesn't necessarily only have to be that you can have a non revolutionary project which is like reproducing capitalist relations, and it's just a a business or whatever. But what separates a non revolutionary cooperative from a revolutionary? Creative is the way in which it fits into a broader, self-conscious movement that is trying to build up self governance that's trying to build up meaningful democracy. So really if we're looking for what we want as material autonomy, it's anything that would any institution, any organization around us. That doesn't need patriarchy to survive. That doesn't need capitalism to survive, and that can be democratized. And if we start with just those that that very broad. Then we can start looking at different areas of how our societies are organized and start seeing the potential to turn it into a movement for a democratic society. A really democratic society beyond the state. I guess Diane or Elif might have.

**Elif:** Again, do you want to go ahead?

**Viyan:** Yeah, I can say something really quick and then hand over to you. So totally agree with what Nick was saying in terms of the mentality and how you know all of these things can be either revolutionary or capitalist depending on the mentality and perspective you bring into them. But just to bring a sort of concrete point, like, yes, I think we should be organizing our own economy. And they don't need to be like super like niche like we make, you know, recycle bamboo, you know, beer mats. Like, they can just be like one of the meal businesses. Right. Because again, it's the mentality that, that and what they feed into the bigger picture that makes them, that makes them radical. Then there's actually a lot of really interesting. Work going on in the UK around Community, businesses, community owned pubs, things like that, which often is very separate from the radical scene. And I will kind of call it a scene rather than the movement recognizing that it's some place that has been my political home for a long time, where anything that has to do with money was rejected. That anything that didn't have a big like, you know, anti capitalist flag on the front was rejected. But to really think about more creatively and a lot more ambitiously and start thinking about how do we have the resources that we

can sustain ourselves as communities as well as other organs. Users in a way which we control, that can also have that democracy and accountability built into it.

**Elif:** Yeah I mean, I don't have much to add. I definitely agree with everything Nick and Van has said. I think you know, I just wanted to reiterate though the particularly the ideological approach to the material as well because obviously we need something to be able to get by right, right. But you know. Well, if we're trying to create an alternative to captures and then we obviously need to understand firstly like you know what Nick said, we need to understand what captures and is of course, we need to understand you know, the state system and particularly the development over 5 millennia. But also if you know in the immediate sense, we really need to understand. Capitalism, capitalism firstly, is not just an economic system. It it's it's it's a general system that has. Well, that there is an effort and in some in many places has really been able to penetrate into every vein of society and therefore when we have a material approach, of course it's it. It there needs to be an economic 1, you know, economic in terms of how we manage our households, how we manage getting by. With a very like with a constant principle, obviously against like. And surplus accumulation and so on. But I think in terms of like I guess, I don't know, maybe the person who asked the question also meant like materially in a way that like what are the kind of like immediate structures we can build like beyond like discussing and so on. I I don't know, I'm just assuming. But I think you know firstly the these discussions are very import. Born. But there is there is an approach to and we didn't get to discuss this much, but like the the Union between like theory and practice and that's really important because the theory is incredibly important that it should never be dismissed at all. But also the theory means nothing if it's not coupled with practice exactly at the. Same time and. Consistently. And therefore, when we're trying to build an alternative, it's important that we're, you know what, whether it's like talking about local assemblies, that's all possible where we live, you know it it's definitely all possible in the UK, whether it's therefore when we are building those, we're building those in terms of the method. But at the structures we're building them. With the principles in which we would want the kind of society for it to realise, and that is, you know, in the Kurdish movement, we there must be a. At a minimum, 40%. But now it's like at now it's all actually at least 50%. Every assembly must have like 5050 in terms of men and women, and there must be coach assistant. So. And that's obviously so no one person should ever be obviously. The like the I guess like the spokesperson of like any system or structure that that is obviously a recipe for inequality within itself. But there should also be the structure of the system that these people are the spokespeople people for also must resemble what is trying to be achieved within society and within those you know, whether it's like autonomous women structures alongside, we don't have much time to obviously. Going to but the the basic answer would be to make sure in the methods of what we're doing when the theory and practice comes together and like through the method in which. We do the work we do. The method resembles what we're trying to achieve, so it's not that you know this is OK because actually the only the endpoint matters because often the endpoint never comes and then all of a sudden the the groups or movements or organizations that set out in some ways. Like with good intentions, achieve some level of freedom actually fell into the same pitfalls of capitalist and nation state systems. So the method is incredibly important and needs to be be also like up for review constantly and. And must be accountable, of course, to its own structure and to the people it claims it's representing.

**Ida:** Thank you Elephant in Vienna and Nick for that, I hope that people whose questions didn't get answered are not too unhappy about that and we have actually loads and loads of resources for everyone. To look at. If you want to find out more, so the first that I would flag up is a a website put up by plan C which is an organization that many of us are involved in. So there's a new self education module which you can see now. On the screen, specifically about the Kurdish freedom movement and and that has loads of resources for different key texts and and important websites. And there's also lots of video and audio content from some people you might recognise. And and it's all. Really refreshed and interesting. It's only just been put up, so there might still be things added to it, but there's already loads on there and the other thing that I would flag up is the Kurdistan Solidarity Network website, which has specifically information about. And. Campaigns so campaign work that a lot of us are involved with and



the Kurdistan other Dirty Network is involved with and you can find out about all of that stuff there and and on that note I was going to pass over the really quickly to Joe from the solidarity. Economy, association and cooperation in Litania project to talk about the waterfall version of the campaign.

**Joe:** Hello. Yes, thank you very much. So we'll just take a a minute or. So. So hopefully you can see the logo while I'm speaking. Can you? Yes, good. OK. I have no idea what you can see. OK. So we we launched this campaign just a couple of days ago. It is a campaign to raise money for essential water projects in Rojava. So there's a lot of complex issues obviously facing the region. There is still an ongoing. Or even despite the coronavirus. Nick, there are still attacks and things like this, but also what we've seen, especially since the start of the invasion of the region of like Sakanya and Tal Abyad. In October last year, there's particular attacks on infrastructure, especially water and electricity infrastructure and things like this. So this is also happening in a region that is facing desertification. The situation of climate change is affecting, obviously, Syria. Really a lot. The water table is constantly dropping. It takes a lot more energy to get water out of the ground. So water is being used as a weapon in an area that's already facing water scarcity. This is kind of the background. So this campaign is being led a lot by cooperatives, so I'm in the Solidarity Economy Association. We are a multi stakeholder Co-op, which just means we have different kinds of Members like worker members like me and other clients that don't work but just support it. There's a lot of other co-ops also, especially UK based co-ops. At the moment that are supporting this project, and we're also working together with our variation, which means the women's economy. So they're in Rojava, they're an autonomous women's economic democratic body, which is involved. But with. Supporting Co-op starting up getting women to participate and kind of take control of their own economic situation so that they're not anymore dependent on them. So the money is we're raising a lot of money. It's a very ambitious crowdfunding campaign and we really hope you'll support it. It's £100,000. And the the money is going towards lots of different kinds of projects which are able to change and respond to the changing situation in the region. So especially things like fixing damaged infrastructure like restarting up. Water stations that were in use before so that it's not any more dependent on ones and now in the region that's been invaded and occupied. Building up the capacity of the local institutions, the Democratic municipalities and especially women's cooperatives, the women's economy are founding some some projects that are like autonomous villages for for women and and their children to live in that are based on ecological principles. So we launched on midday. Saturday, we already raised over 13,000 lbs. And this campaign is actually much funded 1 LB to every 1 LB that we raise. So it means we actually effectively already raised 26,000 lbs which is 1/4 of the money in the last two days that we need. So let's keep this going. It's a really important project for Rojava and we really appreciate your support. Thank you.

**Ida:** Thank you, Joe. And the link to the crowdfunder is in the zoom chat currently, so you can find it there and it is also on the Kurdistan Solidarity Network website. So you can find it there as well. I also have one more thing to to plug. Before we start wrapping up, so if you want to hear more about the practice of the Russian Revolution, since we've touched on a lot of the politics and. Energy the young will be seeking about grassroots democracy in Rojava in a zoom call organised by Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan at 7:00 PM tomorrow evening. So Tuesday evening and you can find the event for that and all the information, all the. On Solidarity Network Facebook page. So just look there. And so that's tomorrow and it will be really, really interesting. And obviously, next week we'll be doing the same thing at the same time. So Monday, 7:30 and that seminar will be asking what democracy looks like without a state. So obviously kind of building on a lot of the discussion that we've already had. Today and. And all of that information again is in the same places, so the website and Facebook page for Kurdistan Solidarity Network and look out for the Zoom link. If you've already registered for it, because we'll send that out again and we look forward to seeing you then. Thank you so much for joining us and thank you. Elif and Diane and Nick for speaking. Today, I hope you'll stay safe and healthy and and we'll be finishing with a soul. So because as we've been talking about culture and music and dancing. Are so important to the Kurdish freedom struggle, we want to just finish each of these seminars with a music performance, and tonight we'll be sharing a performance by group Yoran it's from their 25th

anniversary concert in 2010 and Grip your. We're a socialist group and and they've been together since the 80s playing Kurdish, Turkish and Arabic songs and about the struggle for freedom and they were banned from playing in Turkey and in the last year, several of their members have been on indefinite hunger strike. In protest and in the last month, three of those members have have died. So we're playing these Kurdish songs, two of them, Rachel and ketchup, Kurdan in their memory and hopefully we'll see you next week. Shabash, goodnight.

**Outro Music:** Grup Yorum 25.Yil Konseri - Reso - Kece Kurdan - Daglara Gel

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Lessons from Rojava #1

18th of May, 2020

<[kurdishsolidaritynetwork.wordpress.com/2020/05/22/lessons-from-rojava-seminar-1-podcast](http://kurdishsolidaritynetwork.wordpress.com/2020/05/22/lessons-from-rojava-seminar-1-podcast)>

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