[Updated] Global petition against repression in Ecuador (updated 1 July 2022)

****LATEST *** Thanks to the tremendous victory of the indigenous struggle in Ecuador in the agreement of 30 June, this petition is no longer being promoted. Full details here: https://www.ecosocialist.scot/?p=1340 We thank those who supported it and will keep them informed of developments. The article and updates will remain on our website as a historic record and background of the struggle.*

ecosocialist.scot is launching a global petition (below) against the current repression in Ecuador and in solidarity with the movement of the indigenous people, other workers organisations and social movements for just demands in their general strike against the right wing government of President Lasso. Early signatories include parliamentarians, political and climate activists, and workers' leaders from across the world.

The general strike in Ecuador was initially called by the movement of indigenous people (CONAIE) and has been underway since Monday 13 June. The strike and mass protests are growing in support among workers, but have been met by a massive wave of repression by the Lasso government including the illegal detention of indigenous leader Leonidas Iza, mass arrests and police brutality including the killing of an 18 year old indigenous protestor and at least four others (see below for Latest News and https://www.ecosocialist.scot/?p=1277 for background).

We are targeting this petition at both the workers movement and the climate justice movement. The 10 demands of the movement relate not just to the harsh economic conditions of

the people through rising prices of food and fuel while workers' incomes fall, but are also against the exploitation of the natural environment and extraction of resources that has devastated indigenous people's across Ecuador, the entire continent and the world. The demands include opposition to privatisation of public services and the need for investment in education and health.

The petition can be found on the ipetitions website (link below) and can also be signed on a Google form. ipetitions will display the total global signatories, but if you also fill in the form to share your details we'll be able to publicise your designation and area of activity. The list below will therefore extend. We call on all activists in the workers and climate justice movement to both sign and promote the petition on social media and through your organisations. The world needs to support the movement of indigenous peoples, workers and environmental activists in Ecuador in their hour of need.

> *LATEST EVENTS from our correspondents on the ground – updated 25 June 2022*
>
> *The Ecuador National Assembly is debating online a motion of no confidence in President Lasso though it seems doubtful that it will be passed. President Lasso has suspended the State of Emergency order, in a blatant attempt to try to void the no confidence motion. But the repression against demonstrators continues, as show in videos below. Many thousands more indigenous protestors have mobilised to reinforce those already in the capital, Quito.*

Police brutality against protesters in Quito on Friday.

https://www.ecosocialist.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Ecuador-Video-2022-06-2-attacs-

on-protesters-1.mp4

https://www.ecosocialist.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Ecuador-Video-2022-06-attacks-on-protesters-2.mp4

Indigenous communities in Chimboraza in the central highlands send reinforcements to the protests in capital Quito

Indigenous communities in Chimboraza in the central highlands send reinforcements to the protests in capital Quito (Facebook video)

Thursday 23 June report

Thursday, the eleventh day of the national strike in Ecuador, was a very intense day. It began with an important victory for the indigenous-led movement. Thousands of mainly indigenous protesters managed to reoccupy, entirely peacefully, the main cultural centre in Quito, the Casa de Cultura. This is where the indigenous movement has traditionally found shelter when it mobilises in the capital. It was their centre of operations during the uprising of October 2019. However, as part of its state of emergency, the government had sent the army and police to seal off the building and its grounds. This made it much more difficult this time for the indigenous contingents arriving in Quito to find shelter and have a coordinated logistical and symbolic centre. They had been more spread out around various university campuses that had partially allowed them in. Some were left sleeping out in the cold.

The fact that on Thursday, faced with a huge swell of

protesters outside, the security forces simply let them in, was interpreted as a possible, significant concession by the government. A massive and euphoric rally of indigenous and other protesters took place in the main auditorium, addressed, in particular, by Leonidas Iza, the undisputed, central leader of the strike. There was talk of more concessions and the possibility of meaningful talks, with results, as the movement has been putting it, with the government.

However, a little later, part of the movement, led by indigenous women, began to march from the House of Culture to the National Assembly, to put pressure on them. There have been so-far unsuccessful attempts there to revoke the president's decrees of a state of emergency. This march was met with very severe repression from the police and army, using tear gas, water cannon and live, buckshot, ammunition. At least one young man died after receiving multiple pellet shots in his chest and neck. As night fell, groups of police on motorbikes also attacked at least one of the humanitarian locations where people from the local community were distributing food to indingenous protesters. In one case the police fired pistols at the group as they ate, wounding at least one of them. There are reports of another death as well, taking the total so far to at least four.

*Another worrying development is that sections of the middle-class, racist right in Quito have begun to mobilise against the protests. There are reports of groups of white-shirted young man driving around and abusing isolated individuals or vulnerable groups of indigenous protesters, shouting racist abuse at the "f****** indians" and telling them to go home. It is not clear if there have been physical attacks, but some of these vigilantes seem to be carrying guns. The right also mobilised a march of a few thousand towards the area where the protesters are concentrated, but they didn't get very far and soon turned back to their base in the affluent*

neighbourhoods of north-central Quito.

Thank you for your support.

ecosocialist.scot

Link to Petition: https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/stop-the-repression-in-ecuador

Send us your details if you sign: https://forms.gle/jFzJ5T7a4VTDa2VL9

Text of petition and signatories (English/Spanish)

Stop the repression in Ecuador, Solidarity with the Indigenous-led strike! / Alto a la represión en Ecuador, Solidaridad con el paro Indígena

To also have your name publicly associated with this petition, please complete the form here: https://forms.gle/jFzJ5T7a4VTDa2VL9 This petition was initially organised by ecosocialist.scot / Para que su nombre también se asocie públicamente con esta petición, complete el formulario aquí: https://forms.gle/jFzJ5T7a4VTDa2VL9 Esta petición fue organizada inicialmente por ecosocialist.scot

STOP THE REPRESSION IN ECUADOR, SOLIDARITY WITH THE INDIGENOUS-LED STRIKE!

“The repression against the nationwide strike called by the indigenous movement in Ecuador has only increased since President Guillermo Lasso first declared a state of emergency and a curfew on Friday, 17 June. The police and army have been using brutal force, tear gas, stun grenades, pellet shot, to stop thousands of peaceful indigenous protesters from entering the capital, Quito. At least one protester has died, three are reported to be in a critical condition, dozens more have been wounded or arrested. The army and police have sealed off the House of Culture and several university campuses in an attempt to deny the indigenous protesters their traditional places of shelter in the capital. An immense citizen effort is underway, from students, women’s groups, neighbourhood organisations and the population in general, to collect food, blankets and basic provisions for the protesters who have made it into Quito.

Massive mobilisations and road blocks continue in indigenous territories across Ecuador. The local Governor’s offices have been occupied in at least three provinces.

Secondary school and university students, teachers, health workers, trade unionists, neighbourhood organisations and the feminist movement are mobilising in towns and cities.

Bus drivers, taxi drivers and truckers have either promised stoppages or already joined in the road blocks.

We the undersigned, demand an immediate end to the violent repression of peaceful protesters in Ecuador. We call on President Lasso and the government of Ecuador to lift the state of emergency, release those still in detention and drop all charges against the movement’s best known leader, Leonidas Iza, President of Conaie, who was illegally detained on 14 June and released 24 hours later, but who still faces charges

that carry a possible prison sentence of 1-3 years.

In place of a military response, we urge President Lasso to engage in serious negotiations with the indigenous movement and other social movements, to address their just demands.

These include the 10 points put forward by Conaie – including fair prices for agricultural products; freezing of fuel prices because this generates price increases; respect for the collective rights of indigenous peoples and nationalities; a budget for health and education; an end to the voracious extractivism in indigenous territories; stop speculation and rising prices of basic food basket items; stop the privatisation of strategic sectors; public policies to curb the wave of violence.

These have since been enriched by other social movements incorporating their own demands, for example for public polices to curb gender violence and femicide.

The victory of Gustavo Petro and Francia Marquez in the presidential elections in neighbouring Colombia, show that the people of the region want to turn the page on decades of neoliberal economic policies that only generate poverty, violence, racial exclusion and the destruction of mother earth. We stand in solidarity with all their struggles and with the indigenous-led strike in Ecuador."

ALTO A LA REPRESIÓN EN ECUADOR, SOLIDARIDAD CON EL PARO INDÍGENA

"La represión contra el paro nacional convocado por el movimiento indígena en Ecuador no ha hecho más que aumentar desde que el presidente Guillermo Lasso declaró el estado de excepción y el toque de queda el viernes 17 de junio. La policía y el ejército han utilizado una fuerza brutal, gases lacrimógenos, granadas de aturdimiento y perdigones, para impedir que miles de manifestantes indígenas pacíficos entren en la capital, Quito. Al menos un manifestante ha muerto, tres

se encuentran en estado crítico y docenas más han sido heridos o detenidos. El ejército y la policía han acordonado la Casa de la Cultura y varios campus universitarios en un intento de negar a los manifestantes indígenas sus lugares tradicionales de refugio en la capital. Está en marcha un inmenso esfuerzo ciudadano, por parte de estudiantes, grupos de mujeres, organizaciones vecinales y la población en general, para recoger alimentos, mantas y provisiones básicas para los manifestantes que han conseguido entrar en Quito.

Continúan las movilizaciones masivas y los bloqueos de carreteras en los territorios indígenas de todo Ecuador. Las gobernaciones locales han sido ocupadas en al menos tres provincias.

Estudiantes de secundaria y universitarios, profesores, personal sanitario, sindicalistas, organizaciones vecinales y el movimiento feminista se movilizan en pueblos y ciudades.

Los conductores de autobuses, taxistas y camioneros han prometido paros o ya se han sumado a los cortes de carretera.

Nosotros, los abajo firmantes, exigimos el cese inmediato de la represión violenta de los manifestantes pacíficos en Ecuador. Pedimos al presidente Lasso y al gobierno de Ecuador que levanten el estado de excepción, liberen a los que aún están detenidos y retiren todos los cargos contra el líder más conocido del movimiento, Leonidas Iza, presidente de la Conaie, que fue detenido ilegalmente el 14 de junio y liberado 24 horas después, pero que aún se enfrenta a cargos que conllevan una posible condena de prisión de 1 a 3 años.

En lugar de una respuesta militar, instamos al presidente Lasso a entablar negociaciones serias con el movimiento indígena y otros movimientos sociales, para atender sus justas demandas.

Entre ellas se encuentran los 10 puntos planteados por la Conaie, entre ellos, precios justos para los productos

agropecuarios; congelación de los precios de los combustibles porque esto genera aumentos de precios; respeto a los derechos colectivos de los pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas; presupuesto para la salud y la educación; fin del extractivismo voraz en los territorios indígenas; freno a la especulación y al aumento de los precios de los productos de la canasta básica; freno a la privatización de los sectores estratégicos; políticas públicas para frenar la ola de violencia.

Desde entonces se han enriquecido con otros movimientos sociales que han incorporado sus propias demandas, por ejemplo, políticas públicas para frenar la violencia de género y el feminicidio.

La victoria de Gustavo Petro y Francia Márquez en las elecciones presidenciales de la vecina Colombia, demuestran que los pueblos de la región quieren darle vuelta a la página de décadas de políticas económicas neoliberales que sólo generan pobreza, violencia, exclusión racial y destrucción de la madre tierra. Nos solidarizamos con todas sus luchas y con la huelga liderada por los indígenas en Ecuador".

Initial list of Signatories (22 June 2022/22 junio 2022)

Miguel Urbán, Member of European Parliament/Eurodiputado, Anticapitalistas (Spanish State/Estado Español)

Martín Mosquera (Argentina)

Senador Rafael Bernabe (Puerto Rico)

Luis Bonilla. Otras Voces en Educación (Venezuela)

Olmedo Beluche por el Polo Ciudadano (Panamá)

Josefina Chávez (México)

Eduardo Lucita , EDI, (Argentina)

Eric Toussaint, Portavoz de CADTM (Belgium/Bélgica)

Edgard Sánchez (México)

Manuel Rodríguez Banchs. Democracia Socialista (Puerto Rico)

Joao Machado Borges Neto (Brazil/Brasil)

Tárzia Maria de Medeiros (Brazil/Brasil)

Stalin Pérez Borges. LUCHAS (Venezuela)

Ana Cristina Carvalhaes Machado (Brazil/Brasil)

Fernanda Melchionna, diputada federal/PSOL Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil/Brasil)

Sâmia Bomfim, diputado federal/PSOL São Paulo (Brazil/Brasil)

Vivi Reis, diputada federal/ PSOL Pará (Brazil/Brasil)

Luciana Genro, diputada estadual/ PSOL Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil/Brasil)

Roberto Robain, dirigente del MES/PSOL /concejal de Porto Alegre (Brazil/Brasil)

Israel Dutra, Secretario general del PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Pedro Fuentes, dirigente del MES/PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Bruno Magalhaes, dirigente del MES/PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Philippe Pierre-Charles Groupe Révolution Socialiste (Martinique/Martinica)

Daniel Libreros. Movimiento Ecosocialista (Colombia)

Franck Gaudichaud France Amérique Latine (France/Francia)

Béatrice Whitaker (France/Francia)

Pierre Rousset, NPA, (France/Francia)

Richard Neuville, ENSEMBLE (France/Francia)

Renato Roseno, diputado de Ceará/PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Mario Barreto, presidente de PSOL Río de Janeiro (Brazil/Brasil)

Nadja Carvalho, Isabel Lessa y Fernando Silva del Directorio Nacional del PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Mike Picken, ecosocialist.scot (Scotland/Escosia – UK)

Iain Gault, ecosocialist.scot (Scotland/Escosia – UK)

Terry Conway, Anti*Capitalist Resistance (England/Inglaterra – UK)

Iain Bruce, journalist/periodista (Scotland/Escosia – UK)

Frances Curran, Former member of Scottish Parliament/Socialists for Independence (Scotland/Escosia – UK)

Jim Bollan, Councillor – West Dunbartonshire, (Scotland/Escosia – UK)

Stephen Smellie, Unison Scotland (personal capacity) (Scotland/Escosia – UK)

John Rees, socialist activist (England/Inglaterra – UK)

Barry Sheppard (USA)

Jeff Mackler, National Secretary Socialist Action (USA)

Mónica Baltodano, Integrante de la Articulación de Movimientos Sociales (Nicaragua)

Oly Millán, Integrante de la Plataforma Ciudadana en Defensa de la Constitución (Venezuela)

Tarcísio Mota, Chico Alencar, Monica Benício y William Siri, councillors/concejales/as de Rio de Janeiro (Brazil/Brasil)

Mônica Francisco, State Deputy /diputada de estado Rio de Janeiro (Brazil/Brasil)

Orlando Barrante, Movimiento de Trabajadores y camponeses – MTC (Costa Rica)

Luana Alves, City Councillor/Vereadora São Paulo, Executiva nacional do PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Humberto Meza, Comite Brasileño de Solidaridad con Nicaragua (Brazil/Brasil)

Fernando Carneir, city councillor/ vereador Belém-Pa PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Aurelio Robles, Coordinador del Movimiento Alternativa Socialista-MAS (Panamá).

Mariana Riscali, Nat Sec Finance/Secretária Nacional de Finanças do PSOL (Brazil/Brasil)

Monica Seixas, deputada estadual São Paulo (Brazil/Brasil)

Mariana Conti – City Councillor/Vereadora Campinas, São Paulo (Brazil/Brasil)

Fábio Felix, Dep. Distrital Brasília (Brazil/Brasil)

Josemar, City Councillor/Vereador São Gonçalo RJ (Brazil/Brasil)

Pedro Ruas, City Councillor/Vereador Porto Alegre RS (Brazil/Brasil)

Jurandir Silva, City Councillor/Vereador Pelotas RS (Brazil/Brasil)

“Socialism: Endorsed by James Connolly” tee shirt and other new items at Calton Books, Glasgow

In his tour of TV studios this week, RMT General Secretary Mick Lynch was asked on ITV’s Peston show who his political hero was and immediately answered “James Connolly”.

The presenter looked quizzical and Lynch had to explain that Connolly was an “Irish, Socialist, Republican … trade unionist … hero of the Irish Revolution”.

> *“Who’s your political hero?”*
>
> *“James Connolly, an Irish socialist republican” pic.twitter.com/JAUkY9G5Nd*
>
> *— Ronan Burtenshaw (@ronanburtenshaw) June 22, 2022*

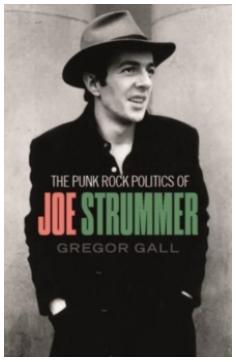
Although of Irish descent and describing himself as an “Irishman”, Connolly was also a Scot, born in Edinburgh, he spoke with a Scottish accent throughout his life. After serving in the British Army and deserting, he became a socialist and the secretary of the Scottish Socialist Federation, standing for local elections. He moved to Dublin for work at the age of 27. In Ireland he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party. After several years working in America he returned to Ireland and helped found the Irish Labour Party before opposing the First World War and taking part in the Easter Rising against British rule over Ireland in 1916. He was executed by the British State for his part in the Rising.

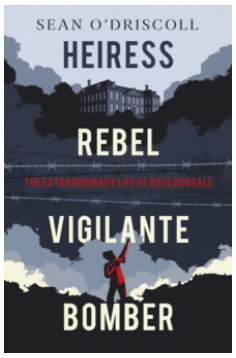
ecosocialist.scot thought it was therefore highly appropriate that this week, Calton Books in Glasgow launched a new tee shirt: “Socialism – endorsed by James Connolly”. It looks like we are going to have more RMT picket lines over the summer before their battle is won, so what could be a better picket apparel than this Socialism – Connolly tee shirt?

We encourage all our readers to get down to Calton Books in Glasgow’s east end – the ***‘best wee radical bookshop in the world’*** **–** and get themselves kitted out for a summer of protest, alongside many of their other new items.



SOME OF THE NEW ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM CALTON BOOKS











Calton Books quality postcards now available including We Still Hate Thatcher!

As always many thanks for supporting the 'best wee radical bookshop in the world'!

[Visit the Shop]

For an Ecosocialist Degrowth

Degrowth and ecosocialism are two of the most important movements—and proposals—on the radical side of the ecological spectrum. Sure, not everyone in the degrowth community identifies as a socialist, and not everyone who is an ecosocialist is convinced by the desirability of degrowth. But one can see an increasing tendency of mutual respect and convergence. Let us try to map the large areas of agreement between us, and list some of the main arguments for an ecosocialist degrowth:

1. Capitalism cannot exist without growth. It needs a permanent expansion of production and consumption, accumulation of capital, maximization of profit. This process of unlimited growth, based on the exploitation of fossil fuels since the eighteenth century, is leading to ecological catastrophe, climate change, and threatens the extinction of life on the planet. The twenty-six UN Climate Change Conferences of the last thirty years manifest the total unwillingness of the ruling elites to stop the course toward the abyss.

2. Any true alternative to this perverse and destructive dynamic needs to be radical—that is, must deal with the roots of the problem: the capitalist system, its exploitative and extractivist dynamic, and its blind and obsessive pursuit of growth. Ecosocialist degrowth is one such alternative, in direct confrontation with capitalism and growth. Ecosocialist degrowth requires the social appropriation of the main means of (re)production and a democratic, participatory, ecological planning. The main decisions on the priorities of production and consumption will be decided by people themselves, in order to satisfy real social needs while respecting the ecological

limits of the planet. This means that people, at various scales, exercise direct power in democratically determining what is to be produced, how, and how much; how to remunerate different kinds of productive and reproductive activities that sustain us and the planet. Ensuring equitable well-being for all does not require economic growth but rather radically changing how we organize the economy and distribute social wealth.

3. A significant degrowth in production and consumption is ecologically indispensable. The first and urgent measure is phasing out fossil fuels, as well as the ostentatious and wasteful consumption of the 1 percent rich elite. From an ecosocialist perspective, degrowth has to be understood in dialectical terms: many forms of production (such as coal-fired facilities) and services (such as advertisement) should not only be reduced but suppressed; some, such as private cars or cattle raising, should be substantially reduced; but others would need development, such as agro-ecological farming, renewable energy, health and educational services, and so on. For sectors like health and education, this development should be, first and foremost, qualitative. Even the most useful activities have to respect the limits of the planet; there can be no such thing as an "unlimited" production of any good.

4. Productivist "socialism," as practiced by the USSR, is a dead end. The same applies to "green" capitalism as advocated by corporations or mainstream "Green parties." Ecosocialist degrowth is an attempt to overcome the limitations of past socialist and "green" experiments.

5. It is well known that the Global North is historically responsible for most of the carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere. The rich countries must therefore take the larger part in the process of degrowth. At the same time, we do not believe that the Global South should try to copy the productivist and destructive model of "development" of the North, but look instead for a different approach, emphasizing

the real needs of the populations in terms of food, housing, and basic services, instead of extracting more and more raw materials (and fossil fuels) for the capitalist world market, or producing more and more cars for the privileged minorities.

6. Ecosocialist degrowth also involves transformation, through a process of democratic deliberation, of existing consumption models—for instance, an end to planned obsolescence and nonrepairable goods; of transport patterns, for instance, by greatly reducing the hauling of goods by ships and trucks (thanks to the relocalization of production), as well as airplane traffic. In short, it is much more than a change of property forms, it is a civilizational transformation, a new "way of life" based on values of solidarity, democracy, equaliberty, and respect for Earth. Ecosocialist degrowth signals a new civilization that breaks with productivism and consumerism, in favor of shorter working time, thus more free time devoted to social, political, recreational, artistic, ludic, and erotic activities.

7. Ecosocialist degrowth can only win through a confrontation with the fossil oligarchy and the ruling classes who control political and economic power. Who is the subject of this struggle? We cannot overcome the system without the active participation of the urban and rural working class, who make up the majority of the population and are already bearing the brunt of capitalism's social and ecological ills. But we also have to expand the definition of the working class to include those who undertake social and ecological reproduction, the forces who are now at the forefront of social-ecological mobilizations: youth, women, Indigenous peoples, and peasants. A new social and ecological consciousness will emerge through the process of self-organization and active resistance of the exploited and oppressed.

8. Ecosocialist degrowth forms part of the broader family of other radical, antisystemic ecological movements: ecofeminism, social ecology, Sumak Kawsay (the Indigenous "Good Life"),

environmentalism of the poor, Blockadia, Green New Deal (in its more critical versions), among many others. We do not seek any primacy—we just think that ecosocialism and degrowth have a shared and potent diagnostic and prognostic frame to offer alongside these movements. Dialogue and common action are urgent tasks in the present dramatic conjuncture.

1 April 2022

Signatories: Michael Löwy, Director of Research Emeritus, CNRS, Paris, author of Qu'est-ce que l'Ecosocialisme? (Paris, Le Temps des Cérises, 2020); Bengi Akbulut, Concordia University, Montreal; Sabrina Fernandes, Doctor of Sociology, ecosocialist organizer, post-doctoral fellow at the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and producer of Tese Onze. Giorgos Kallis, professor at ICTA-Barcelona, and author of The Case for Degrowth (Polity Press, 2020).

Source: Monthly Review Volume 73, Issue 11 (April 2022)

Bodies United

red clydesider reports on the ongoing struggle for bodily autonomy and specifically the fight for safe zones around abortion services and health clinics in Scotland.

The latest attack on reproductive rights in the United States of America has stirred a fury that has leapt beyond the borders of the troubled republic. This is no surprise. Whatever happens, over there have repercussions that are felt all across the globe, and these latest events show how easily cherished democratic and civil liberties can be rolled back by

determined reactionaries and fundamentalists. As such, they stand as a stark warning to the rest of the world. Whatever has been gained by struggle, can only be protected and sheltered by struggle. This fact cannot be ignored.

Here in Scotland, anger at the assault on Roe vs Wade has mingled with a home-grown cause, the fight for buffer zones around healthcare sites offering abortion services that would insulate them from anti-abortion protests. Since 2017, the British Pregnancy Advisory Service and Back Off Scotland have recorded a series of repeated protests at seven different hospitals and clinics across Scotland. Just this year, there was a candlelight vigil of around one hundred people outside the Maternity Wing of Glasgow's Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, and in recent months smaller pickets by preachers have been plaguing clinics like Sandyford, with those using the clinic being harassed and condemned as they approach the building.

To address this, the Green MSP Gillian Mackay has proposed a bill for the Scottish Parliament to establish legally protected safe access zones of a perimeter of 150m for abortion clinics and healthcare settings, in order to protect the persons and the privacy of those going to these clinics for abortions. Within the buffer zones, the bill aims to prohibit behaviour such as impeding or blocking somebody's path or an entrance to abortion services, intimidating or harassing people, and photographing or filming a person within the zone. There is currently a consultation for the bill taking place online.

As the consultation progresses and the bill moves through parliament, however, there is still a continuing menace being faced by clients of clinics all across Scotland, as at Sandyford, where the previously mentioned religious protesters have tended to make so much noise that the staff within cannot actually give consultations, check-ups and treatment to patients, healthcare that also includes rape counselling and

sexual health services for the LGBTQ+ community. Action must therefore be taken in the meantime to give clinics support, protection and solidarity against harassment. As the feminist movement agitates for political change at the level of rights and legislation, there must also be a spirited defence of treatment at the ground level.

Beth Douglas is a woman that has been involved with great energy in exactly these struggles, and it's for that reason that I sat down to talk with her about the fight for buffer zones.

To begin with, I asked Beth about who she is, and what she does. In the broadest terms, she describes herself as an activist, with a particular focus on equality campaigning and bodily autonomy. In addition to her work on the abortion rights issue, she fights for trans health care and for the destigmatisation and decriminalisation of sex work. In more narrow party terms, or, as Beth put it, "If you want to push me into a box", she is a member of the Scottish Green Party and a co-convener of its LGTBQ+ wing, the Rainbow Greens.

Not just this, but she has long been active in protest against how Pride marches are often co-opted by corporate money and used as an image-laundering opportunity for big business and the state, particularly arms traders and the military. Indeed, those of you who followed or participated in Glasgow's radical scene in the 2010s may remember her as one of the "Pride Five", who were unjustly arrested at Glasgow Pride 2017 for protesting against capitalist influence on the event and the participation of a Police Scotland bloc in the march. Perhaps a few of you may even have been there at the courtroom solidarity demonstrations.

And, as you may have gathered from her advocacy for trans health care, Beth is a transgender woman. How does this facet of her identity shape her conception of feminism? What perspectives does she, a trans woman, bring to this movement?

And in what ways do the struggle for trans rights link up with the struggle for abortion rights? I was particularly interested to find out, so I got right into the questions about her work and her views.

As for many of us, American events have been a painful sight for Beth to witness. But it isn't simply a well-meaning sympathy that spurs her into action around abortion rights. What primarily drives her is her own experience of the ways in which society constricts bodies to fit rigid gender and sexual norms.

"As a trans person," Beth says, "I am very used to being told by the state what I can and cannot do with my body," so she is eager to fight against any attempt by the state to tell others what they are allowed to do with theirs.

"As a trans person," Beth says, "I am very used to being told by the state what I can and cannot do with my body," so she is eager to fight against any attempt by the state to tell others what they are allowed to do with theirs.

Additionally, she recognises that these political issues are not neatly separated from each other: "We are about to see millions of people lose their right to reproductive healthcare across America, and it is horrific to see people being robbed of their bodily autonomy. And even though I will never need to have an abortion, it still has a knock-on effect and matters to me."

The strengthening of patriarchal state control over bodies, the denial of free choice for people to make decisions about themselves, only gives the state a stronger position from which to police other aspects of gender and sexuality, to keep anyone who dissents from a strict patriarchal idea of "proper" gender and sexual roles in line by force. Therefore, Beth concludes that "if you weaken bodily autonomy on abortion you weaken it for trans people too and vice versa".

It is a stance that calls to mind that slogan of the workers' movement, "an injury to one is an injury to all," or the admirable sentiment of old Bakunin, that the freedom of others, far from negating or limiting my freedom, is, on the contrary, its necessary premise and confirmation. These are fine socialist principles from which to go forward, and they animate Beth's political practice.

To return to actions of solidarity: It is with a grimace that Beth concedes that "unfortunately, American politics are global politics." Indeed, one can scarcely avoid being shaken by even the slightest stumbles of an imperial giant.

Feeling those tremors, Beth really wanted to do something to show solidarity with her American sisters. So, she and another trans woman, Heather, got together a demonstration at the United States Consulate after the Edinburgh May Day march on May 7th. With a couple of days' notice, the demo brought together about eighty people, and the speakers included activists from Backoff Scotland, the Green MSP Gillian MacKay and a member of the Scottish Trans Alliance.

People from the crowd also took the mic, and some of them were Americans who spoke about how they felt sad and desperate for their loved ones over there, and how they felt scared to go back to their home country because of the way things are going.

Not only this, but speakers from the crowd also talked about how they themselves had been confronted by bigoted protesters on their way into healthcare settings when going in for not just abortions, but for STI checks, menopause checks, and HIV check-ups and rape counselling.

Testimony like this served to underline the contributions of Gillian MacKay and Backoff Scotland, who raised the demand for Buffer Zones in their speeches. It wouldn't even be a week before yet more service users were being harassed outside

clinics, as would happen to someone close to Beth just days after the consulate demonstration.

Beth's friend was on their way to the Sandyford clinic to receive rape counselling, and right outside the building were two religious preachers, who yelled at them to "stop killing babies!" as they entered. The two preachers had their own sound system, and they were so loud that Sandyford couldn't offer care on one whole side of their building for that day.

Hearing of this from her friend, Beth was furious and immediately went over to Sandyford to film the preachers and expose what they were doing on social media. This footage would quickly find its way to the national press, and with the word getting out on Twitter, more counter-protesters came down to join Beth and help drown out the preachers. She remembered hearing "a whole cocktail of bigotry coming out of these men's mouths", including rants about Islam, and at one point when some gay men came out of Sandyford and were told by the preachers that "they had chosen a life of sin."

She remembered hearing "a whole cocktail of bigotry coming out of these men's mouths", including rants about Islam, and at one point when some gay men came out of Sandyford and were told by the preachers that "they had chosen a life of sin."

Eventually, faced with opposition from the crowd, the preachers packed up and left. "In the end," says Beth, "it wasn't the police who moved these bigots, but the people who showed up and argued with them. The whole time the police didn't take action". That kind of inaction, Beth argued, shows why buffer zones are hugely important: "The patients who use Sandyford, whatever they are using the clinic for, are just trying to get healthcare, and if we allow people to stand outside and harass them then we are denying their right to healthcare."

It wasn't long before Beth was back at the United States

Consulate agitating on this theme again. After the first consulate demo, there was an American woman named Lindsay Jaacks who wanted to organise another protest at the consulate in a week's time. She asked Beth and Heather for help, so Beth got the Scottish Activist Legal Project (SCALP) involved to do legal observing. Thinking of how the Irish police have consistently hassled and targeted abortion protesters over there, Beth was keen to involve SCALP going forward.

Demo two had a similar number of people, but a different crowd. Following on from Edinburgh May Day, demo one was mostly younger people, but at the second demo, there were some new faces. Now, while the first protest was taking place, gender-critical activists were not present, instead holding a lunch meetup over on Glasgow Green, a tradition inaugurated by the ultra-rich Blairite J. K. Rowling and aped by her middle-class adherents.

When Beth expressed surprise and disappointment on Twitter that, in a situation when women's rights are being rolled back, gender-criticalists are more focused on hobnobbing and complaining about the Gender Recognition Act than showing up to demonstrations, she was met with odd accusations her criticisms amounted to "daring to tell women they couldn't have lunch."

In any case, it seems the consciences of some gender-criticalists were stung into action by this, and they turned up to the second demo at the consulate. This is something Beth welcomed: "It doesn't matter if they hate me or not, the important thing is we work together to protect the very concept of bodily autonomy- You can't attack the bodily autonomy of one group and expect it to remain for yourself."

> *"It doesn't matter if they hate me or not, the important thing is we work together to protect the very concept of bodily autonomy- You can't attack the bodily autonomy of one group and expect it to remain for yourself."*

Unfortunately though, when Beth spoke on the microphone, to talk about how the American religious right has been using its money and resources to stoke division in the feminist movement, and about how when bodily autonomy is weakened for one group it is for all groups, she was heckled by the gender-criticalists in the crowd.

The heckles were predictable, simplistic and parochial. To Beth's linking of struggles, she heard shouts that the issue "was just women's' bodies" and women's' bodies alone. When Beth spoke about showing solidarity with our trans brothers and non-binary siblings, who also need the right to abortion, the gender criticalists shouted "they're women!"

The first set of heckles can easily be dispensed with by pointing out that, given, as we have seen, that the range of treatments impacted by anti-abortion protests goes beyond abortion to HIV check-ups, rape counselling, LGTBQ+ health services and so on, it is clear that the Buffer Zone struggle is overall a fight against a generalised assault on reproductive/sexual healthcare which expresses itself primarily as an abortion rights issue.

The gender-criticalists who shout about the issue just being women's' bodies have not paid close enough attention to what is happening at Sandyford and elsewhere. Additionally, they wilfully ignore that the abortion struggle is an issue closely tied to all other struggles against rigid patriarchal gender and sexual norms and that it represents one front in the fight to resist a largescale reaction by the patriarchy against any challenge to its power.

Is it a coincidence that the same Republican Party zealots leading the charge against abortion in the United States are also the same bigots stoking a panic about LGBTQ+ people? That these are the same Jim Crow capitalists that ruthlessly oppose the Black Lives Matter movement, striking workers and tenants unions? Of course not!

As for the second set of heckles, Beth is frustrated about how the gender criticalists are obsessing over whether trans men are actually women, and so making the struggle about identity rather than rights- In doing so, she argues, “you are changing the argument from ‘Everyone deserves abortion’ to ‘Are trans men actually women’”. She considers it a distraction from the real core of the issue, one that is utterly pointless given the high stakes and the urgency of the situation.

> *the heckling behaviour of the gender-criticalists toward Beth provides a clear example of unsystematic, narrow, single-issue thinking that fails to connect movements into a robust united front, and which foolishly rejects solidarity from other oppressed groups.*

In summary, the heckling behaviour of the gender-criticalists toward Beth provides a clear example of unsystematic, narrow, single-issue thinking that fails to connect movements into a robust united front, and which foolishly rejects solidarity from other oppressed groups.

Thankfully, a better example of political unity was close at hand. Another important event Beth wanted to highlight was the Trans Pride march in Paisley on the 20th of May. Members of the Scottish Greens, along with members of other parties, brought along a banner reading “Trans and Queer People Support Buffer Zones” and took it on the march.

“It was very heart-warming to see how many people marched behind that banner,” Beth recalled, speaking of the warm response they got from attendees of Trans Pride. For her, the march served as a clear marker that the trans community is ready to support abortion rights and back the demands of the feminist movement for the protection and the advancement of those rights.

“This is how solidarity is supposed to work.” Beth feels that for some lefties, “Solidarity has become the new ‘thoughts and

prayers,’ a slogan you can say as a token gesture of support without actually doing anything. “True solidarity,” Beth argues, “is waving your flag for one group but campaigning for another, whether that’s trans people fighting for the bodily autonomy of all people, or lesbians and gays supporting the miners’ strike”, a clear nod to the legendary Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) group of the 1980’s.

So, where next for the struggle from here?

Since my interview with Beth, she certainly has been busy, organising further demonstrations against the continued targeting of the Sandyford Clinic by fundamentalist preachers. While buffer zones are being sought through parliament, it is essential that the movement is able to organise for the protection of abortion clinics wherever and whenever.

Along with concrete defence of clinics goes the agitation for political change. Beth called on everyone reading this article to fill out the consultation as soon as possible: “We need as many people filling it in as we can!” The link can be found below, and I emphatically urge all of you reading this to complete it, and help show the Scottish Parliament how crucial Buffer Zones are.

With the Summer Pride season coming up, Beth was keen to spread the call for buffer zones all over Scotland. “We’re going to keep using that buffer zone banner. It’s important it goes to as many prides as possible.” She aims to bring the buffer zone struggle wherever it can be brought, to demos, marches and events of all sorts. “We really need to get around and defend the idea of bodily autonomy wherever it is threatened regardless of who or where. If you can deny that to someone you can deny anything to them.”

I ended by asking Beth how people can show support for the cause and how they can keep up to date with her. Her first port of call was the Safe Access (Abortion Services) Scotland

Bill Consultation, which can be found here The Consultation runs until the 6th August 2022. Once again, Beth was eager to point people in its direction. “It is important that as many people fill in the buffer zone consultation as possible,” Beth said, and she implores all of you to take part in it as soon as you can. As well as that, she directs everyone reading this to follow and support the work of Back Off Scotland.

If you want to keep up with Beth’s own work, check out Beth’s Twitter, her recent article for Ungagged and the Twitter of the Rainbow Greens.



And finally, if you want to hear from the woman herself, make sure to come along to Anticapitalist Resistance’s Zoom meeting, “The Overturn of Roe vs Wade: The Struggle for Reproductive Justice in the US” which takes place on June 30th at 7.30 pm. The speakers include Zora Monico, an activist with the Michigan Coalition for Reproductive Liberation and co-founder of WWN, Whenever We’re Needed, Kerry Abel, Chair of Abortion Rights UK, and Beth Douglas whose work you are quite

acquainted with by now. Signup here and share on Facebook.

Left and independentists advance in French elections

The population of the French state go to the polls for the fourth time this year in the second round of the legislative elections on Sunday 19 June. While the right wing Macron won the Presidency again, this was against the far right challenger despite the strong showing of the left. However in the parliamentary elections the left has organised better, into a new coalition known as NUPES (pronounced 'noop') led by Jean Luc Melenchon. NUPES is putting up a strong challenge to the Macron Presidency and stands to be at least the main opposition, and possibly even the majority grouping in the National Assembly.

Of particular interest in Scotland will be the election campaign in France's colonial possessions in South America and the Pacific. In Guyane (French Guiana), the left and independentist movements had a strong showing in the first round in one of the constituencies with only candidates of the left going through to the next round in one of the two constituencies and NUPES are challenging Macron's candidate in the other (see article on Guyane here – in French at present, we will try to get English language updates shortly). In Kanaky in the Pacific, the independentist forces of the FLNKS (Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front) have succeeded in being the challenger to Macron in the second round.

ecosocialist.scot is pleased to republish two articles

explaining the latest situation – one by fellow Fourth Internationalist Dave Kellaway, originally published on the website of Anti*Capitalist Resistance (a new revolutionary organisation in England and Wales), and the other an article on the Kanak elections originally published by L'Anticapitaliste and translated by International Viewpoint.

Setback for macron in 'third round' of french elections



Dave Kellaway reports on the first round of the French parliamentary elections.

14 Jun 2022

Gérald Darmanin, the French interior minister, the same politician who blamed the Liverpool fans for the debacle of the Champions league final a few weeks ago, did his best to massage the election results. He tried to define some left candidates as not really being part of the left coalition so that the overall vote for the coalition was reduced. Respected news outlets like Le Monde did not stand for it and declared the New Popular Ecological and Social Union (NUPES) the winners by a small margin. No wonder Darmanin was trying to fiddle the figures; this is the first time in the history of the Fifth Republic that a recently elected president has failed to come first in the parliamentary elections that immediately follow the Presidential race.

The margin of victory for the coalition led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon was around half a percentage point. NUPES scored 26%

followed by Macron’s Ensemble on 25% and Le Pen’s far right National Rally (RN) came in at just under 20%. French politics is still currently structured around these three political blocs. The traditional conservative party which came out of the Gaullist tradition, the Republicans (LR), got 11%.

Notable successes for the left included the election of Danièle Obono, a black woman leader of the LFI who had received much abuse from the right and the first place of Stéphane Ravacley, a left wing baker who did a successful 11 day hunger strike to stop his 18 year old Guinean apprentice being deported. He beat Macron’s candidate.

Since it is a first past the post electoral system over two rounds, the popular vote will not translate into the same proportion of seats. At the moment NUPES is projected to get between 150 and 190 seats whereas Ensemble is predicted to get between 255 and 295. A working majority is 289 so at the moment it is likely, but not certain, that Macron will just about do that. Of course Macron could govern without 289 seats by doing deals with the other blocs, particularly the LR, but it would make it more difficult to get controversial legislation through like increasing the retirement age.

The limits of Macron’s popularity were seen in the elimination of the former hated Minister of Education, Blanquer, in the first round.

The limits of Macron’s popularity were seen in the elimination of the former hated Minister of Education, Blanquer, in the first round. His attacks on teachers have received their just desserts. Macron has still failed to create a solid political base. His success has always been based on skilful manoeuvring, taking advantage of the crisis and decline of the mainstream left and right of centre parties. At the same time the rise of the hard right and fascists allow him to present himself as the safe alternative to the extreme right. Today he is trying to extend the notion of bullwark against extremes by

red baiting Mélenchon. His ministers keep talking about a French Chávez or a risk to the French role in the European Union.

Despite the good showing of the left, particularly compared to 2017 when there was no unity among the left and ecologists, the slogan put forward by the France Unbowed (La France Insoumise – LFI) of 'Mélenchon Prime Minister!' will not become reality. It will be the main opposition bloc in parliament and its political centre of gravity will be more radical that the previous social liberal Socialist Party. The LFI will have the biggest number of MPs within the left/ecologist alliance. On paper the LFI has an even more radical left social democratic programme than Corbyn's.

Only 47% of the French electorate bothered to vote, a new low for these elections. This expresses a real disgust at and alienation from the political system. It also shows both the difficulty and opportunity for the left coalition. Even before the first round, the left recognised that one way of completely blocking Macron was to convince the abstainers to vote for progressive reform. Current projections of seats could change significantly if there were to be a big mobilisation and a cut in the rate of abstention. Mélenchon made his post election speech centre on the nation of 'deferlement' – general mobilisation for the second round.

Only 47% of the French electorate bothered to vote, a new low for these elections. This expresses a real disgust at and alienation from the political system.

Although the NUPES are through to the second round in over 300 seats, there is a much smaller stock of potential votes from those parties which did not make it through. NUPES already regrouped the whole of the left except for candidates of Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle), which always rejected the coalition, and the few supported by the NPA (New Anti-Capitalist Party), which generally voted for NUPES except

where social liberal PS candidates were standing. These currents only got about 1.4% of the vote and so will not weigh heavily.

On the other hand, Macron can expect to pick up a good part of the LR vote whether its candidates are standing against NUPES or the hard right RN. Where NUPES are running off against the RN the LR vote is more likely to go to the hard right. Leaders of Macron's coalition have been much more ambivalent about supporting NUPES candidates against the RN as a 'republican duty'. Some have come out clearly for a NUPES vote while others say that it has to be on a case by case basis since some NUPES candidates do not share 'republican values'. Of course, Macron was happy to bleat on about solidarity with republican values when he relied on left voters voting for him in the second round of the presidential elections in order to defeat Le Pen.

The near 20% for Le Pen is much better than in 2017 and is a success for her reactionary current. It will help to further embed her hard right politics in the political institutions. This time she is more confident about getting the 15 seats needed to have an official parliamentary group which confers definite advantages. It will further change the relationship of forces between her current and the mainstream rightwing. Her absolute refusal to make any agreement with the pro-Vichy, fascist Éric Zemmour has paid off politically. He even failed to make the second round in a constituency where he had done well in the presidential elections. It looks like he is very much a busted flush – a balloon pumped up by the media in the preliminary phase of the presidential elections. Le Pen's continued threat to the left is her popularity among some working class communities.

Any weakening of the dominant class enemy is always helpful to working people's struggle to defend their gains and build a fairer society.

Any weakening of the dominant class enemy is always helpful to working people's struggle to defend their gains and build a fairer society. Macron has to get his reforms through parliament and therefore a working majority is important. It is a practical motivation for people to vote left in the second round. Even if, as likely, NUPES fails to block Macron in parliament, the fact of having around 100 MPs on a radical left position could well help any mobilisations. The social liberal PS will not be the leadership of the left.

The anti-capitalist and revolutionary left will be doing their best to mobilise for the second round but will also be calling on NUPES to develop the struggles outside parliament. If you cannot stop reactionary bills going through parliament, you have do it by mobilising forces on the streets. In recent decades, France has seen various neo-liberal reforms, including by Macron, stopped by mass demonstrations and strikes. Progress in the unity of the left and greens can give confidence to such movements.

Dave Kellaway is on the Editorial Board of Anti*Capitalist Resistance, a member of Socialist Resistance, and Hackney and Stoke Newington Labour Party, a contributor to International Viewpoint and Europe Solidaire Sans Frontieres.

Originally published here: https://anticapitalistresistance.org/setback-for-macron-in-third-round-of-french-elections/

Kanak independentists present common candidates for

legislative elections



WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2022, BY USTKE

The French elections also concerned the French overseas départements and collectivities such as Kanaky (New Caledonia) in the south-west Pacific Ocean. The results of the vote on 12 June showed that the independendist forces grouped under the FLNKS (Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front) banner had achieved their first goal – to be present in the second round, despite the very low turn out of barely one-third of registered voters. The archipelago is divided into two constituencies, in both cases the run off is between the candidate of Macron's grouping (Union loyaliste-Ensemble) and the FLNKS candidate.

At a press conference on Tuesday 17 May at Karigou in the town of Dumbéa, the Kanak independence movement announced the names of its candidates for the June 2022 legislative elections. Grouped around Wasissi Konyi, representative of the Palika in the political bureau of the FLNKS, the independentist candidates presented themselves, along with their alternates. Why were they standing? What were their goals?

"The independence movement must be represented in the National Assembly, it must be in the negotiations with the French government when they start. The independentists will ask for bilateral discussions," announced the spokesperson for the

Front. Following the last two congresses, that of the FLNKS and the popular congress, on 7 and 8 May at the N'Dé tribe, the independentist, progressive and nationalist forces made this commitment, and they reaffirmed that "the Nouméa Accord is a process of decolonization, the country is on the road to emancipation" . "The goal is to get into the second round, it is completely achievable," indicated the FLNKS spokesperson, before the candidates took the floor to introduce themselves and explain their participation in these national elections.

> *"In the National Assembly, our independence movement is not represented"*

In the first constituency (Nouméa, Îles-des-Pins, Loyalty Islands): Wali Wahetra, representative of Palika in the Province of the Islands at the congress, originally from Drehu, has been a teacher for thirty years. In the Congress, she is the Vice-Chair of the Education and Culture Committee. "It's a huge responsibility. The independence movement has chosen us to be ambassadors". During her speech, she recalled the five positions on which the Front and its allies agreed: "Challenging the political legitimacy of the last referendum consultation; the accession of New Caledonia to its full and entire sovereignty by the transfer of the last remaining powers; the non-negotiable maintenance of the achievements of the Nouméa Accord, which is guaranteed by the principle of irreversibility; maintaining New Caledonia on the list of countries to be decolonized; a categorical refusal to choose a new status within the French Republic. The bilateral format was recorded at the N'Dé congresses," she said. "The first constituency is represented by Nouméa, Île-des-Pins and the Loyalty Islands. The delimitation of boundaries (decided by the then Minister of the Interior Charles Pasqua in 1986) is totally iniquitous and unjust. We want to call on the solidarity of the New Caledonian people, if they have the values of democracy at heart. In the National Assembly, our independence movement is not represented. We would like to go

there to have our own say. The last Kanak deputy who went to the Assembly was Rock Pidjot in 1986 and since then the independentists have never been able to be elected because of these boundaries. This is partisan and completely unfair. It is a colonial attitude of the French state…"

> *"We must tell the ordinary Caledonian that they must no longer be afraid"*

Her alternate is Jean-Fidéli Malalua, fourth Vice President of the USTKE (Union of Kanak and Exploited Workers). He has been active in the trade-union movement for fifteen years. He says he is "battle-hardened from politics and especially from social questions" . He is of Futunian origin, he was born in La Foa in 1973. "I have taken up a cause that corresponds to my convictions, it is the struggle of the Kanak people. I'm not hiding from you that it's not easy" . Questions might arise. "Why go to the National Assembly if you are asking for independence? Why participate in these elections? It is precisely the opportunity to go there to give a certain tone to the vision of the country and to give our point of view to the elected members of the National Assembly, but especially to Caledonians of all ethnic groups. As a non-Kanak and especially one of our generation. This country is viable together. We have to tell the average Caledonian that they don't have to be afraid anymore. We need respect from the Caledonian voters … In the word independence, there are clichés that scare people… In Kanak and Oceanian culture, the search for consensus means that we have to discuss anyway…," he explained, saying that the politics of fear would lead nowhere. "The mosaic of communities gathered around an independence project is not exclusive. It is a common project and of general interest," he concluded.

> *"We are proud to be in this fight"*

In the second constituency (the municipalities of Grand-Nouméa

and the rest of the territory), the candidate is Gérard Reignier, former head of the Union Calédonienne and the FLNKS. “What we want is to have a representation in the National Assembly to make heard the voice of independentists and nationalists, of those who want this country to become a nation with all its populations in a common destiny”. “The load is heavy but the combat is beautiful,” he said. “We are proud to be in this fight. We hope to win and bring back some truth to the National Assembly… We have the duty to inform the French political class, but also French public opinion, which is in favour of the full sovereignty of our country. The words liberty, equality, fraternity should not be besmirched. Perhaps France will be less beautiful without New Caledonia, but certainly if the French state, along with the independentists, allows this country to access its full sovereignty, France will be greater,” he added.

His alternate, Marie-Pierre Goyetche, was president of the USTKE from April 2012 to December 2015. Currently, she is vice-president of the honorary college of the Trade Union Organization and vice-president of the Labour Party. A teacher by training, she got involved very early in the trade union struggle. This trade union commitment will enable her to make the link with the field of politics. She was elected to a municipal council, to the southern province and to the congress. “I am mixed-race, I am proud of my New Caledonian family who arrived through prison. [1] And I am proud of my Kanak culture in which I was brought up” . She wanted to send this message to the government: “It is out of the question to touch the composition of the electorate, that is the reason for our commitment to these legislative elections.”

[1] New Caledonia was a French penal colony from 1864 to 1987. Prisoners sent included those convicted for participation in the Paris Commune ,notably Louise Michel.

Published on the USTKE (Union of Kanak and Exploited Workers) website and in the weekly Anticapitaliste , issue 619, 9/06/22. Reproduced from: https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7704=

Ecuador: Indigenous leader released after mass protests

Leonidas Iza is free but a national strike continues in Ecuador, writes María Isabel Altamirano Solarte for ecosocialist.scot.

After 24 hours of illegal detention, Leonidas Iza was finally released.

Iza is president of CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), which is the largest organisation in Ecuador bringing together the majority of indigenous peoples and nationalities. His release has been a triumph of social mobilisation and international solidarity.

Leonidas Iza was arrested by elite forces of the national police and the Armed Forces in a violent and illegal manner, accused of “paralysing a public service” and incitment. His entire detention process was outside the framework of Ecuadorian law.

His release is a triumph of popular pressure and international solidarity. On the one hand, the affiliated organisations of CONAIE have come out more forcefully to express their discontent in their territories and in different cities of the country.

In Cotopaxi, the province where Leonidas Iza is from, the communities filled the streets of the main city, Latacunga. When they heard that their leader was being transferred to the Military Fort of Cotopaxi, they went there to demand his release.

In Quito, the capital of Ecuador, young people, university students, feminists, dissidents and ordinary people have also joined the mobilisation in the vicinity of the National State Prosecutor's Office to demand the release of the political detainees and to express their demands for education, health and non-violence by the state.

International Solidarity

International solidarity has been very important, with messages of support for Leonidas Iza and rejection of the persecution of political leaders, as well as other demonstrations such as the collection of signatures to demand his release.

The government of the banker Lasso, who seeks to impose neoliberal policies, has been totally inept in responding to the fair demands of the population and CONAIE. These demands include fair prices for agricultural products; freezing of fuel prices because this generates price increases; access to employment and no job insecurity; respect for the collective rights of peoples and nationalities, budget for health and education; stop the voracious extractivism in indigenous territories; stop speculation and rising prices of basic food basket items; stop the privatisation of strategic sectors; generation of policies to curb the wave of violence and hired killings; public policies to curb gender violence and femicide.

But this government has taken up again the National Security doctrines of the 'internal enemy', persecuting and

criminalising social activists and indigenous leaders, women, students, workers, etc. Under this logic, eight young leaders of the Guevarist Movement were arrested a month ago. And now, in the context of the National Strike called by CONAIE, Leonidas Iza has been arrested. But they have also arrested other indigenous leaders of CONAIE's affiliated organisations, young students and women who took to the streets to protest and demand their rights during these two days of the National Strike.

In addition, during these two days there have been very strong acts of repression, and there have been injuries with tear gas bombs and even pellets. Social communicators were attacked by members of the national police. But in these two days of the National Strike the mobilisation has also grown and strengthened.

Although his release is a victory for mass protests and international solidarity, Leonidas Iza still faces charges and a possible prison sentence for his role in the strike. Worldwide solidarity needs to be stepped up to call for all charges to be dropped and for the Ecuador government to grant the just demands of the strike movement.



Protests were taking place across Ecuador (Pic @CONAIE_Ecuador)



CONAIE is the largest organisation in Ecuador bringing together the majority of indigenous peoples and nationalities