Solidarity with Nicaraguan people – Scotland's role

In Scotland, soon after the 1979 Sandinista [FSLN] revolutionary triumph over the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, a united front solidarity campaign was established called **Scottish Medical Aid for Nicaragua** (SMAN), *writes Norman Lockhart*.

The campaign included trade unions, Labour Party and other campaigns, including church organisations influenced by liberation theology.

It played a similar role to the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign based in London and was based on the experience of Medical Aid for Palestine.

It also incorporated the El Salvador solidarity campaign (ELSSOC) which had been more prominent in Scotland.

It not only sent NHS doctors and nurses to work mostly in the southern region and concentrated in sending Scottish delegations there, including trade unionists and MPs, but also built health centres and other facilities for people neglected by the Somoza dictatorship.

A high point of the solidarity was the visit by the then revolutionary Sandinista president Daniel Ortega to the Glasgow Mayday 1989 celebrations at a time when right wing US President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher dominated the world of imperialist politics.

The revolution was never to be considered perfect – it was even once described as the Labour Party but with guns!

One of the important lessons of both the Nicaraguan FSLN and the FMLN in El Salvador had been recognising the common

grounds for uniting in struggle.

In the context of the popular struggles world wide and particularly in Latin America again today, it should be a priority to defend democratic and human rights against what can be referred to as the Orteguista dictatorship regime.

Ortega and his partner the current vice president Murillo have become another brutal dictatorship that has imprisoned several hundred political prisoners including his once fellow Sandinista combatants.

For example, one of them who has been detained in solitary confinement for over a year, Dora Maria Tellez, led a military wing of the Sandinista army in overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship and was also the minister for health during the Sandinista government.

This process became more obvious about four years ago when police, aided by para military thugs, shot down workers, peasants and students demonstrating in defence of the environment and for better state pensions.

While the Sandinista revolution heralded many obvious benefits for the population of Nicaragua in health and education as well as land reforms and farming cooperatives, it also set a worldwide example to those forces struggling for social justice and human rights.

Most notably the recognition of the need for the indigenous and minority black groups on the Atlantic coast for self determination.

This was very significant in undermining the base of the ‘contras’, the terrorist opposition financed, trained and armed by the USA.

Part of the consolidation of the revolutionary process and the best way for a legitimate international profile was the first

democratic presidential election that confirmed the Sandinista popular liberation victory.

In contrast, a clear expression of the revolution's many faults was the so called 'piñata' when after losing the next election many financial rewards and privileges (state property, land and businesses) were given to faithful FSLN party servants or bureaucrats.

The dictatorship of Ortega has even refused permission for revolutionaries from other latin american states to visit Nicaragua to find out first hand what conditions for working class people are like. And even the Organisation of Latin American States OEA has condemned Ortega's undemocratic regime repeatedly over the last four years but this year it was unanimous and without abstentions.

There is still a network of Scots previously sympathisers of the Sandinista revolution who support the people's continuing struggle.

Norman Lockhart, October 2022

Image from https://correspondenciadeprensa.com/

Solidarity with the protest movement in Iran!

Statement of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International
Since 16 September Iran has been thrown into turmoil by widespread protests against the policies of the ruling clique. They were triggered by the brutal murder of the young woman Jîna (Mahsa) Amini, who was beaten to death by the "morality police". The duration and the expansion of the demonstrations

to all parts of the country and almost all strata of the population testify to a deep-seated discontent and anger that goes beyond rejection of the regime's deeply restrictive dress code for women. The causes also lie in a social plight that has been worsening for years for large sections of the population and in massive repression.

Unlike previous unrest, such as the rebellion against electoral fraud (2009) or protests against rising fuel prices (2019), the rallying cry in the forefront is "Down with the Islamic Republic!" After a month of protests the movement is still going strong and spreading.

Compared to past decades, the social hardship among the population is even greater today. More than half of the population lives below the subsistence level and can only survive with a lot of difficulties. Health care has become even more inadequate than it already was. The ecological damage is enormous, with severe water shortages, desertification and deforestation affecting the rural population particularly, and high levels of air and water pollution in the cities.

What is striking and enthusing is that the movement is led by young women, including school students. This is fed by the history of women's struggles and movements in Iran since before the days of the 1979 revolution. Popular support is based on a now widely shared hatred of the regime and of the corrupt theocratic clique that dominates and exploits the country, enriching itself to the point of becoming dollar billionaires.

The fact that the movement has lasted for so long and on such a broad scale, despite the harsh repression, can only be explained by the anger felt above all by the younger generations. Broad sections of the students and pupils who are resisting their confinement and taking to the streets for a different life.

The second specificity of today's wave of protest is that it has spread from Jîna (Mahsa) Amini's home city in Kurdistan throughout the country. This is why the Kurdish chant "Jin Jiyan Azadi" translated to Persian as "Zan Zendegi Azadi" has become the main slogan of the movement today. In Kurdistan, the rejection of the theocratic regime and the struggle for self-determination have a long tradition and are being expressed with force. What is new is the scale of the protests in Baluchistan, where social oppression and massive poverty are the worst in the country. The repression there manifested itself, for example, on 7 October when more than 100 people were shot dead during a demonstration in the provincial capital Zahedan.

And a third prominent feature should not be overlooked: For a week now, calls for a political strike have been increasing, something that has not happened for more than 35 years, since the crushing of workers' councils and left organisations. A first section of the oil industry in the southern Khuzistan province has been on strike for a week, evoking memories of 1979, when the oil workers' strike was the prelude to a nationwide general strike. However, the leaderships of the main independent unions are almost without exception in prison.

It is solely up to the people of Iran to determine their own destiny, with full democratic rights and gender equality, with religious freedom and secularism, defending the rights of all minorities and working for social and economic justice.

We therefore call for:

– Broadening the international support of all progressive and left-wing forces for the protest and revolt movement in Iran against the religious dictatorship, for the defence of democratic freedoms, and for the dismantling of the police and militias that repress the individual freedoms notably of women.

– Expressions of internationalist solidarity such as messages from women's movements, trade unions, student associations and so on to give political and moral support to the movement. We encourage trade unions to discuss with their counterparts practical forms of solidarity; universities to call on their counterparts to protect the lives and freedom of their students; women's and student movements to make links with movements in Iran.

– Support for public demonstrations of solidarity with the movement on the call of the progressive forces in the Iranian communities in exile, this is crucial.

– An end to all repression in Iran and for human rights organisation to monitor the crimes committed by the state in their repression of the population.

– For the right to humanitarian visas primarily for persecuted women and girls and LGBTIQ people, fleeing the repression in Iran.
Woman, life, freedom!

Zan, Zendegi, Azadi

Jin, Jiyan, Azadi

18 October 2022

Executive Bureau

Reprinted from https://fourth.international/en/566/middle-east/475

Photo: Uprising in Tehran Sept 2022 Copyright Darafsh / Wikimedia commons

After the floods, Pakistan needs reparations, not charity

At the time of writing, *writes Farooq Tariq on 13 September*, more than one-third of Pakistan is under water. Flash floods, generated by abnormal monsoon rains have so far claimed the lives of 1350 people. One million residential buildings are totally or partially damaged, leaving more than 50 million people displaced from their homes.

Crucially, the flood is expected to add $10 billion worth of damage to an already teetering economy. More than 793,900 livestock have died, depriving families across Pakistan of a critical source of sustenance and livelihood. Around two million acres of crops and orchards have been impacted.

These impacts are undeniably a symptom of an accelerating climate crisis. Despite producing less than one per cent of global carbon emissions, Pakistan bears some of the worst consequences of the climate crisis globally. The nation has consistently ranked in the Global Climate Risk Index as among the top ten most vulnerable countries in the world over the past twenty years. As Julien Harneis, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Pakistan says: 'This super flood is driven by climate change – the causes are international'.

The people of Pakistan are the latest victims of a global crisis to which they have contributed almost nothing,– and which has instead been driven by the excess emissions of rich countries and corporate polluters. This fundamental injustice is at the root of increasing demands for climate reparations from Pakistan and the wider Global South.

We are now taking out more loans to simply pay off the interest of our previous debts. The money sent out of Pakistan

to pay off our international creditors could be spent instead on rehabilitating the millions who are displaced

One such demand is debt cancellation. Debt injustice and the climate crisis go hand in hand. As extreme weather events intensify countries on the frontlines, such as Mozambique, and island states in the Caribbean are facing increasing economic damages. After these events, low-income (and often already heavily indebted) governments face a shortfall in funding and have little choice but to take out further loans to rebuild livelihoods and communities.

We can already see this cycle happening in Pakistan. Even before the floods, Pakistan was drowning in debt, having faced a steep fall in foreign exchange because of soaring global commodity prices and a rise in the US dollar. The cost of electricity and food has soared. By the end of this year, Pakistan will have had to pay a total of around $38 billion dollars to the IMF, World Bank and other financial institutions including the Chinese State Bank. A spiral of borrowing is generating an impending economic crisis.

The floods have prompted a flurry of foreign aid, with USAID contributing $30 million, adding to a United Nations contribution of $3 million last week. The UN is launching a new flood relief plan for Pakistan, as its officials echoed calls for greater contributions from around the world. But still, it is nowhere near enough.

As humanitarian organizations scrabbled for emergency funds, a familiar face reared its head once more. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), recently approved a bailout request with a plan to release $1.1 billion to the country. At first glance, this may seem like a vital step in Pakistan's recovery, but to pile further debt on a country already in the grips of a financial crisis will only end in further disaster.

The empirical evidence overwhelmingly supports the view that a

large portion of government debt harms economic growth potential, and in many cases, the impact gets more pronounced as debt increases. Pakistan's high degree of indebtedness has made it more vulnerable to economic shocks and weakened the country politically vis-a-vis powerful external lenders. It has also greatly reduced Pakistan's ability to invest in education and healthcare, or its infrastructure.

If the West intends on supporting Pakistan through this crisis, it needs to implement a series of measures that tackle the scale of damage inflicted by the Global North upon the South since the Industrial Revolution. As a first step, this should include comprehensive debt cancellation, alongside greatly increased climate finance to support communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

In addition, many climate-vulnerable countries including Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Tuvalu are now also calling for compensation from rich countries for the disasters they are now facing.

This is often termed as 'Loss and Damage', which even now in 2022 is still not an official part of the negotiations agenda at the UN climate change conference, COP. Climate-vulnerable countries have on numerous occasions demanded climate compensation from the rich countries and corporations that have created climate chaos – each time they have been blocked. At COP27, there must be further concrete progress on these discussions.

The concept of waiving debt is not new. During the pandemic, some debt relief was put in place for low-income countries, although the private sector has continued to collect payments, which inevitably exacerbated the economic crisis generated by Covid-19. But even private creditors can be kept at bay when there is a strong moral demand. In July, a few months after Russia's invasion, Ukraine's creditors made a landmark agreement to cease collecting debt payments during the war.

If international institutions suspended the collection of debts, Pakistan wouldn't need new loans. The money sent out of Pakistan to pay off international creditors could be spent instead on rehousing the millions who are displaced. Pakistan needs at least four years to rebuild and reconstruct its economy and to cover up the damages done by floods and heavy rains.

But there also remains a wider question: who should pay for the climate crisis? Why should Pakistan have to take out any loans at all to pay for the impacts of a crisis it has not caused? Pakistan's climate minister Sherry Rehman told The Guardian that global emission targets and reparations must be reconsidered, given the accelerated and relentless nature of climate catastrophes hitting countries such as Pakistan.

Of course, repairing climate apartheid and fixing the crisis is not as simple as writing a cheque, and many other measures are needed to support Pakistan's people through the catastrophe they are facing.

Yet without debt relief or funding to compensate for loss and damage, Pakistan's cycle of debt and climate crises is only set to worsen



By Farooq Tariq

Farooq Tariq is the General Secretary of the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, a network of 26 peasant organizations and a coalition member of the international platform La Via Campesina.

This article is republished from the website of CADTM, the Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt. CADTM is an international organisation based in Liege, Belgium and is led by Eric Toussaint, a writer of several books on debt published

by Resistance Books, here and here.

Original Source : New Internationalist

Imagining an Independent Wales

The Welsh/Cymraeg movement for independence from the UK state has been growing significantly across the country over recent years, *writes Mike Picken*.

A demonstration organised by Yes Cymru and All Under One Banner Cymru on 1st October in the capital of Cardiff/Caerdydd saw around 10,000 people march for independence/**Annibyniaeth**.

Speakers from across the independence movement addressed marchers about the failures of the Tory-led UK state, including many public figures from the cultural movement.

There has always been a strong movement in Wales for independence, rooted in the Welsh language and cultural movement, but what has been significant in recent years has been the growth in discussion particularly among the left, about the importance of political independence and what type of state a future independent Wales needs to be. New left wing organisations such as the Welsh socialist organisations

Undod, Labour for an Independent Wales and the Welsh Underground Movement (previously Valleys Underground) have emerged and are working alongside the left in Plaid Cymru.

It is particularly significant for those of us in Scotland that the Welsh Labour Party leadership have accepted that independence is a legitimate constitutional demand and that not only are supporters of Independence openly tolerated and even adopted as candidates by Welsh Labour, but that the question of independence should be examined by the new Constitutional Commission established with the support of Welsh Labour in Senedd Cymru. Not only that, Welsh Labour government in Senedd Cymru has a cooperation agreement with independence-supporting Plaid Cymru covering a range of topics but especially action on the climate crisis. This is the complete opposite of Scottish Labour, where supporters of Independence are hounded out, and despite Keir Starmer's claim of "No Deals with the SNP" disastrous agreements with the ball-wrecking Tories in several councils, including Edinburgh, have been made by Scottish Labour.

The topic of what sort of independent Wales is needed was discussed at a meeting on the eve of the 1 Oct demonstration, under the heading "***Imagining an Independent Wales***". This meeting was called by another newly formed organisation Melin Drafod – which means 'Think Tank" in the Welsh language – and is devoted to discussing ideas about progressive social change within an independent Wales. Among the speakers was former leader of the Plaid Cymru political party, Leanne Wood. This meeting and discussion was recorded and has now been published by Melin Drafod. The meeting like all meetings organised by Welsh independence activists is bilingual, but for Scottish readers the comments of Leeanne Wood are entirely in England.

Video originally published here: Imagining an Independent Wales – Melin Drafod

You can read more about the position of marxists and Fourth International supporters on Welsh Independence in the following documents:

- The submission by Anti Capitalist Resistance, supported by ecosocialist.scot, to the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales
- ‘Disunited Kingdom’ an analysis by Terry Conway following the elections in Scotland, Wales and England in May 2021
- ‘Whispers of a Forgotten Nation’ by the late Ceri Evans, marxist writings by a leading Fourth International supporter about Wales, the national question and related issues



Radical Independence Campaigners to protest at UK

Supreme Court in London

The Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) is calling on supporters of Scottish and Welsh Independence and for Irish reunification to make a protest at the UK Supreme Court in London on Tuesday 11 October at 10am, *writes Mike Picken,* when the Court will begin hearing evidence on whether the Scottish government has the legal powers to call a second independence referendum in October 2023.

RIC has called for Scottish independence supporters and allies to gather outside the court from 10am on Tuesday morning to peacefully assert our right to hold a referendum.

There is a Facebook event page here:

Let The People Decide! | Facebook

The hearing will consider a reference from Scotland's most senior legal officer, Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, under the provisions of the devolution legislation (the Scotland Act 1998) allowing her to refer a matter to the UK Supreme Court for determination. The Court will be asked to decide whether a proposed consultative referendum on Scottish Independence is within the current legal powers of the Scottish Parliament. The UK government of the new Conservative Prime Minister, Liz Truss, will oppose the proposed referendum through the offices of its legal officer, the Advocate General. There will also be a formal intervention heard in favour of the rights of the Scottish Parliament and people for self determination, submitted by the Scottish National Party (SNP)

This legal battle follows the May 2021 election to the Scottish Parliament when a majority of members (MSPs) elected for the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Scottish Green Party had a manifesto commitment to hold such a referendum in the first half of the parliamentary session (ie before the end of 2023). The UK Tory government now headed by Liz Truss and

her band of right wing Brexit supporters, and supported by the Labour Party official opposition of Keir Starmer, is totally opposed to holding such a referendum and is trying to block it by any means available, even though a majority of the Scottish Parliament have been elected on that basis. The UK Supreme Court is now being asked to determine who has the power to call a referendum.

The Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) is saying that the people of Scotland must be allowed to decide, not the Westminster Parliament and not the courts.

The UK Supreme Court is based in London, but is the only court that covers the whole of the UK – which is divided into separate legal systems: that of **Scotland**, whose legal systems and institutions are more closely related to the 'Civil Law' systems of Europe and were preserved as independent under the 1707 union of England and Scotland; that of the largely 'Common Law' system of **England**, which historically also included **Wales** though there is now a small separate body of Welsh law since legal powers of Senedd Cymru were changed in 2007; and that of the part of the **north of Ireland** under UK state control, a direct legacy of the colonial partition ('Northern Ireland'). The eleven Judges in the UK Supreme Court are drawn from all of the legal systems; although the majority are from England, the current President of the Court is a Scottish Judge. Five of the Judges will hear the case and a decision is expected in two to three months, possibly sooner.

RIC is pointing out that the decision of the Court will also have significant implications for the increasing numbers supporting independence for Wales and the reunification of

Ireland, and it is calling on supporters of those causes to join them at the Court and build links across the UK state for the right of the nations within the UK state to self determination.

ecosocialist.scot hopes to provide further coverage of the protest and the Supreme Court hearing so please return here for more updates.

Radical Independence Campaign

Another Scotland Is Possible

The Radical Independence Campaign works for an independent Scottish republic. We see independence as a means to achieve the radical change that Scotland urgently needs. We stand for a Scotland that is:

- *For a democratic, secular, socially just and environmentally sustainable Scottish republic.*
- *Action based on the sovereignty of the people not the UK Crown, leading to the setting up of a Constituent Assembly.*
- *Action to establish universal health care, education, housing, income, pensions and trade union rights; and to win land reform and challenge environmental degradation.*
- *Equality and opposition to discrimination on grounds of sex, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion/belief, disability or age*
- *Solidarity with the struggles for workers' rights, democracy and self-determination, based on internationalism from below*
- *Support for Scotland's artistic and cultural revival in all its languages*

Climate Camp Scotland: Meet & Camp Out @ the Kelpies, Saturday 15 October/

From our friends at Climate Camp Scotland …

Hey there campers!

We've got some tasty stews on the stove this Autumn so make sure you stop by the kitchen tent…

Meet & Camp Out @ the Kelpies, 15 Oct

We are beginning to lay foundations for an incredible 2023 climate camp.

On Saturday 15th October we are going to Falkirk / Grangemouth for a series of **informal tea-time chats** with local organisers, community members and trade unionists to hear about living with **Scotland's biggest polluter**, the recent wildcat strikes, the cost of living crisis, and their aspirations for a just transition.

After our meetings we'll head to a (secret) **fire and camp spot** to enjoy the Autumn leaves and hopefully some stars! It should be a very wholesome and productive day and night, and everyone is welcome to join for as much of the runnings as they feel able.

The day starts at **1.30pm** with the community meeting at **the Kelpies** Visitor Centre Cafe.

To get a briefing with venue details, travel info, and how to take part click here.

It should be a wholesome and fun day for the group so we hope you'll consider joining us!

Climate Camp have our regular meetings online, organised via Signal. To find our more about these or to get more involved, join our Signal groups here.

Autumn love and solidarity,

Climate Camp Scotland

Solidarity with Ukraine! Solidarity with the Workers of Ukraine! Glasgow Public Meeting Sat 22 October 10.30am

Speakers from the recent Ukraine Solidarity Campaign delegation to Ukraine will address a public meeting in Glasgow called by Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland on Saturday 22 October 10.30am at John Smith House, 145-165 West Regent Street Glasgow G2 4RZ.

The leaflet advertising the meeting is available in PDF form here and reproduced below. The Facebook event is here.

Solidarity with Ukraine! Solidarity with the Workers of Ukraine!

Public Meeting:
10.30am, Saturday 22nd October
John Smith House 145-165 West Regent St. Glasgow

Speakers from the recent Ukraine Solidarity Campaign delegation to Ukraine:
– Chris Ford (Ukraine Solidarity Campaign)
– Alena Ivanova (Another Europe is Possible)

The war in Ukraine continues to dominate headlines: Ukraine's counter-offensive, Putin's escalating rhetoric, sham 'referendum' in Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine, and Putin's military mobilisation decree.

The focus of the media is primarily on the extreme cost to human lives and the Ukrainian economy as a result of the Russian invasion. But Ukraine's labour movement is not just fighting at the front.

It is also fighting to defend and extend rights and protections for all. As it struggles to continue to fund its military resistance, the Ukrainian government and Parliament has also proposed emergency measures dramatically weakening employment rights.

With rising inflation, energy insecurity and the urgent need for more military and humanitarian support, Ukraine needs our solidarity more than ever. At the same time, global powers are already initiating discussions about reconstruction and pushing their agendas. But what kind of Ukraine are

Ukrainians bravely fighting for?

A recent USC solidarity delegation to Ukraine met with trade unions and left groups in Ukraine. It discussed recent developments in the war, workers rights and the future reconstruction of Ukraine. Organisations met by the delegation included:
The Federation of Trade Unions; the Confederation of Free Trade Union; the State Employees Union; the NGPU Miners Union; the Free Trade Union of Rail Workers; the Education Workers Union; Sotsiyalnii Rukh and the Social-Democratic Platform.

This meeting has been organized to provide first-hand accounts of the struggles of the Ukrainian people and of Ukrainian workers, and to help build labour movement solidarity with those struggles.

Organised by Ukraine Solidarity Campaign(Scotland). PCS, ASLEF, and the NUM are affiliated to the USC at a national level. Affiliates in Scotland include local GMB, Unite, NUJ and ASLEF branches. To invite a speaker from the USC (Scotland) to your branch meeting, e-mail: uscscotland@yahoo.com

Ukraine Solidarity Campaign (Scotland): Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland |Facebook
Ukraine Solidarity Campaign National Website: https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org



Jîna ‘Mahsa’ Amini Was Kurdish And That Matters – Say her Kurdish name.

In 1852, *writes Meral Çiçek,* the 35-years old women’s rights activist Tahirih Ghoratolein was executed by the Iranian regime in Tehran for two things: her Bábí faith and unveiling herself. Her last words were: “You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women.”

Almost exactly 170 years later, in the same city, a 22-year-old woman died after being arrested by the so-called guidance patrol, Islamic religious police who adhere to strict interpretations of sharia law. Her offence was not wearing the hijab in accordance with government standards. When the police detained her, the woman’s brother explained they weren’t from Tehran and were unaware of the city’s rules (the family were visiting from Saqqez, a Kurdish city in the west, close to the border of Iraqi Kurdistan) to no avail: she was taken to a

police station anyway. There, her family allege, she was "insulted and tortured", collapsing before eventually being taken to hospital. Upon arrival doctors discovered the woman had suffered "brain death". Two days later, she suffered a cardiac arrest and was unable to be resuscitated.

The woman's name was Jîna, which means 'life' in Kurdish. *Jîn* (and its equivalent *Jiyan*) is etymologically related to *Jin*, the Kurdish word for woman. But the world has come to know her better in death by her Iranian name: Mahsa Amini.

Shortly after Amini's violent death on 16 September, protests broke out and spread from the Kurdish parts of Iran to the whole country and the world. Demonstrators chanted the Kurdish slogan "jin, jiyan, azadî" – "woman, life, freedom". But in news reports, particularly Western ones, Jîna Amini's Kurdish identity has been erased – she is described as an Iranian woman and her 'official' Persian name 'Mahsa' – which for her family and friends existed only on state-documents –is the one in headlines. Calls to "say her name" echo in real life and across social media but unwittingly obscure Jîna's real name and, in doing so, her Kurdish identity.

Iranian state discrimination against Kurds includes a widespread ban of Kurdish names which forces many families to register their children officially with non-Kurdish names, while maintaining their actual names at home. This in turn fragments the experience of many Kurds and creates an 'official-legal' and an 'unofficial-illegal' identity. The authentic ethnic-cultural identity loses its validity and a name that says nothing about your roots identifies you.

Some people that insist on calling Jîna Amini by her state-approved name Mahsa effectively argue that she did not lose her life under detention because she was Kurdish, but only because she was a woman. Therefore – according to the argument – it is not necessary or significant to call her by her

Kurdish name.

Iran is an antidemocratic state, based on brutal rule. Anyone who is not part of the apparatus of oppression is in danger – no matter what sex, religion or ethnic group they belong to. Some are even more vulnerable than others. This is particularly the case for women and for Kurds.

It is likely that the immoral 'morality police' that arrested Jîna on 13 September at the entry of Shahid Haghani Expressway in the presence of her brother (who has also an unofficial Kurdish and an official Persian name) were aware of her ethnic identity. It is possible that they treated her with particular brutality because of it. It is likely that she resisted the insults and curses of the officers so much *because* of her identity and political consciousness as a Kurdish woman.

But regardless of whether or not her Kurdish identity played a significant role in the detention and brutal violence that led to Amini's death, understating or concealing her ethnic origin represents a reproduction of colonial politics of the Iranian regime towards the Kurdish people. This attitude is a distillation of the power and suppression of the majority nation – even when expressed by well-meaning Persian feminists.

Amini's death has seen Kurdish slogans calling for women's liberation and revolution echo around the world. "Jin, jiyan, azadî" – and its translations – has reverberated through crowds and demonstrations held in solidarity with freedom-seeking women in Iran. Even in Afghanistan women chanted the slogan, despite attacks on demonstrators by the Taliban.

This chant originated in the Kurdistan women's liberation movement. It embodies the movement's goal: to liberate life through a women's revolution. It was first chanted collectively by Kurdish women on 8 March 2006, at gatherings marking International Women's Day across Turkey. After this

came a period in which annual campaigns challenged patriarchal mindsets and misogynist practices within Kurdish society. This period of intense struggle against patriarchy culminated in the Rojava revolution 10-years-ago, on 19 July 2012, which sent the slogan "jin, jiyan, azadî" echoing around the world, beyond the borders of Kurdistan.

The Kurdish women's movement does not aim to monopolise this slogan, in contrast it aims to universalise it in the struggle for women's democratic confederalism worldwide. Nevertheless, its roots and context should be acknowledged. Otherwise, we run the risk of emptying our slogans of active struggle and allowing them to lose their meaning. As I write this piece, women of the German party CDU/CSU – under whose government the Kurdish liberation movement has been criminalised the most – are protesting Jîna's killing in Berlin, holding posters with the German translation of "jin, jiyan, azadî".

Jîna Amini was a Kurdish woman. Kurdish women have fought so hard not to be erased in life; do not let their stories be rewritten in death.

Meral Çiçek is a Kurdish political activist and journalist.

This article was originally published by Novara Media: https://novaramedia.com/2022/10/04/jina-mahsa-amini-was-kurdish-and-that-matters/

End of the Nightmare in Brazil?

The result of the first round of the Brazilian elections on 2nd October is mixed, *writes Michael Löwy*. Certainly, Lula,

the candidate of the Workers' Party, is in the lead, with 48.4% of the vote. But the hope of a victory in the first round has vanished and, above all, he is closely followed by Jair Bolsonaro, the neo-fascist candidate, with 43.2%—much more than the polls predicted. There will therefore be a second round on October 30, which, barring an unexpected reversal, should be won by Lula. However, Bolsonaro's supporters appear to be in control of parliament as well as several regional governments. In short, the neo-fascist current will probably lose the presidency, but remains an extremely powerful political force.

Brazil's dominant classes have never had a great fondness for democracy. Inheritors of three centuries of European colonization and four centuries of slavery, they have shown, in the last hundred years, a strong propensity for an authoritarian state from 1930 to 1945 under the personal power of the caudillo Getulio Vargas; 1964-1985, a military dictatorship; in 2016, a pseudo-parliamentary coup against President-elect Dilma Rousseff; from 2018-2022: neo-fascist government of Jair Bolsonaro. The more or less democratic periods seem to be parenthesis between two authoritarian regimes.

The four years of Bolsonaro's presidency have been a huge disaster for the Brazilian people. Elected with the support of the bourgeois press, business circles, landowners, banks, and neo-Pentecostal churches, he took advantage of the fact that Lula, the only opponent capable of beating him, had been put in prison, under false accusations. The former captain was unable to fulfil his dream of re-establishing a military dictatorship and shooting "thirty thousand communists." But he has sabotaged every health policy in the face of Covid, resulting in more than 600 thousand deaths; he has ravaged Brazil's fragile public services (health, education, etc.); he has reduced tens of millions of Brazilian women to poverty; he has actively supported the destruction of the Amazon by the

kings of soybeans and cattle; he has promoted neo-fascist, homophobic, misogynist, and climate-sceptic ideas; he supported the paramilitary militias (responsible for the assassination of Marielle Franco); and he has not ceased to try to set up an authoritarian regime.

Will the October 2022 elections put an end to this nightmare? Lula is likely to win in the second round on October 30. But Bolsonaro, following the example of his political model, Donald Trump, has already announced that he will not recognize an unfavorable result: “If I lose, it is because the vote has been falsified.” A part of the Army, strongly represented in his government, seems to support him: will it go so far as to take the initiative of a military coup against the elected president, i.e. Lula? This hypothesis cannot be ruled out, even if it does not seem the most likely: the Brazilian Army is not used to moving without the green light from the Pentagon and the State Department. But right now, Biden has no interest in supporting a tropical Trump at the helm of Brazil. Bolsonaro tried to mobilize his supporters—police, militiamen, retired generals, neo-Pentecostal pastors, etc.—to create a crisis situation comparable to that caused by Trump around the Capitol after his electoral defeat. Will he have the same success as his North American idol?

Despite the highly questionable choice of a reactionary bourgeois politician (Geraldo Alckmin) as his running mate for for vice-president, it is clear that Lula—Luis Inacio da Silva, former metalworker, trade union leader of the great strikes of 1979, and founder of the Workers’ Party—is currently embodying the hope of the Brazilian people to put an end to the neo-fascist episode of the last four years. He is supported by a broad coalition of forces, which includes not only most of the organizations of the left and the social movement—trade unions, the landless movement, the homeless movement—but also the broad sectors of the industrial bourgeoisie, which unlike the land owners, who remain loyal to

Bolsonaro, came to the conclusion that the ex-captain was not a good option for business. It must be acknowledged that the electoral battle was not preceded by a rise in popular mobilization as in Colombia.

The Party of Socialism and Freedom (PSOL), the main force of the radical and/or anti-capitalist left in Brazil—where there are several currents associated, in one form or another, with the Fourth International—decided, after a long internal debate, to support Lula from the first round. A small dissident current, led by the economist Plinio de Aruda Sampaio Jr, who disagreed with this choice, left the party, but the main left currents of the PSOL—such as the Movement of the Socialist Left (MES), whose spokeswoman, Luciana Genro, was the presidential candidate of the PSOL in 2014—have, despite their desire for a PSOL's own candidacy in the first round, accepted the majority decision and actively participated in the campaign in support of Lula.

Most PSOL activists have no illusions about what the government led by Lula and the Workers Party (PT) would be: probably an even more unbalanced version of the social-liberal policies of class conciliation of previous experiences under the aegis of the PT. Admittedly, these experiments have allowed some social advances, but it is not certain that this will be the case this time. This will depend, of course, on the ability of the radical left and, above all, of the social movements, of the exploited and the oppressed to move, autonomously and independently. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the vote for Lula is an unavoidable necessity to free the Brazilian people from the sinister nightmare that the regime of Jair Bolsonaro has signified.

Once elected, Lula will face many difficulties: fierce opposition from sectors of the Army, the kings of cattle and soybeans, neo-Pentecostal churches, fanatical (often armed) supporters of Bolsonaro. He risks having before him a hostile Congress, dominated by reactionary forces; the present Chamber

is governed by the so-called “4 Bs: beef, banks, Bibles, bullets”, i.e. landowners, finance capital, evangelical sects and paramilitary militias. One of the decisive battles of the future will be the rescue of the Amazon, which is being destroyed by agro-capitalism.

In addition, Lula will be, like Dilma Rousseff, under the permanent threat of a “parliamentary coup.” This results from a disastrous choice for the vice-presidency: Geraldo Alckmin, former governor of Sâo Paulo, the former right-wing opponent beaten by Dilma Rousseff in 2014. Lula probably chose him to give pledges to the bourgeoisie and disarm the right-wing opposition. But he has thus given a decisive weapon to the ruling classes. If Lula takes any action that does not please the Brazilian oligarchs, who controls the majority of the parliament, he will be the subject of impeachment proceedings, as was the case with Dilma in 2016. In this sad precedent, she was punished under ridiculous pretexts, and replaced by the vice-president, Temer, a reactionary of the so-called bourgeois “center”. The same could happen to Lula: impeachment and substitution by Alckmin. The Colombian Gustavo Petro was more skilful, choosing as running mate Francia Marquez, an Afro-Colombian woman, feminist and environmentalist.

That said, the imperative of the moment, in October 2022, is, without a doubt, the vote for Lula. As Trotsky explained so well almost a century ago, the broadest unity of all the forces of the workers’ movement is the necessary condition for defeating fascism.

3 October 2022

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