

Worth Fighting For – Bringing the Rojava Revolution Home, Book Launch Glasgow Govan Sun 6 August

Authors Jenni and Natalia are launching their book describing their three years supporting the Kurdish Freedom Movement in Rojava.

The event in Glasgow on **Sunday 6 August 4pm-6pm** is to share the book and the ideas in it, to discuss how we can relate the revolution in Kurdistan to our own lives and to come together and celebrate struggle. They will introduce the book and come together to discuss the ideas. There will also be snacks and fiddle music. Bring friends, comrades, colleagues, kids and grans!

The event will be at [Galgael, 15 Fairley Street in Govan, Glasgow G51 2SN](#) (public transport journey planner here: [Journey Planner | SPT | Strathclyde Partnership for Transport](#))

The book is £7, distributed by Active Distribution and can be ordered [here:](https://www.activedistributionshop.org/shop/books/5436-worth-fighting-for.html)
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Or from bookshops – Title: Worth Fighting For: Bringing the Rojava Revolution (Paperback – published 1 Jun. 2023) by Jenni Keasden (Author), Natalia Szarek (Author), Matt Bonner (Cover Art) ISBN-10 : 1914567218 ISBN-13 : 978-1914567216

“We wanted to bring (the Rojava) revolution home through stories of both the epic and the mundane, through day to day

moments in all of their messiness and poetry. In a world where earnestness is looked down on, this book is where we give ourselves permission to fall in love with a revolution. This book is a product of shared moments with hundreds of comrades, of tales hundreds of years old, of the novels we read as children, of militant struggles old and new, and of an ongoing conversation that's happening right now. We didn't start it and we certainly aren't trying to finish it. But the more people contribute the richer we can build the future. This is what we are committed to be a part of."

Russia's war on Ukraine and the European lefts – Murray Smith writes

Murray Smith writes on the Russia's war on Ukraine and the response of the left.

Editorial note by ecosocialist.scot: Murray Smith is a well known figure on the left in Scotland. He studied History, Politics and Soviet Studies at the University of Glasgow, was a founder of the [Scottish Socialist Party \(SSP\)](#), SSP International Secretary for a period in its early days, and editor of the journal Frontline, a prominent marxist journal in Scotland during the early 2000's. Currently he lives in Luxembourg where he is a leading member of the left wing party [Déi Lénk \(The Left\)](#), and its representative on leading bodies of the [European Left Party](#). In this lengthy article Murray Smith explains the background to the internationalist and marxist position on the war in Ukraine and describes the retrograde position of 'campism' – those on the left who see

the Ukraine war as nothing more than a proxy war between the USA and Russia in which the interests of the 40+million Ukraine working class are regarded as irrelevant. He also explodes the myths that the Russian aggression against Ukraine was justified by the allegations of a 'right wing coup d'etat' in 2014 and that US foreign policy is entirely aimed at military aggression against the Russian state. At its most recent conference in March 2023, the current day SSP lapsed into the position of 'campism', with many of the arguments used by leading figures, such as the present International Secretary Bill Bonnar, being drawn entirely from the arguments that Murray Smith demolishes below. The (unpublished) position passed by the SSP in March supports the campaign of those who now seek to disarm the Ukraine working class, a position that has been regrettably [advanced in the UCU](#) and other trade unions in Britain, and stands in counter-position to that [passed overwhelmingly by the annual congress of the Scottish TUC](#) , backed by the [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign](#), which supported Ukraine's right of self-defence against the Russian invasion and right to get weapons from wherever it wishes. All the evidence is that the vast majority of working class people in Scotland support Ukraine's right to self-determination and right to resist Russia's invasion militarily. Bill Bonnar has been declared as the SSP candidate in the forthcoming Rutherglen and Hamilton West Westminster by-election and this will provide an opportunity for the SSP position on Ukraine to be examined in public and contrasted with the arguments of Murray Smith below. The article was originally published on the website of ['Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières'](#) ([European Solidarity without Boundaries](#))

Russia's war on Ukraine and the European lefts – by Murray Smith

The war in Ukraine has cast a harsh light on the radical left in Europe, revealing the best and the worst. On the one hand, an internationalist response of solidarity with Ukraine. On the other, a “peace camp” where you find pacifists, but especially sectarians, for whom the main enemy is always US imperialism. Rather than a movement for peace, it is above all a movement of non-solidarity with Ukraine. We will come back to that.

Let's start with some thoughts on war. We can be against war in general. We can consider that we must overcome this barbaric way of settling conflicts. We can think that it is possible to do it in the existing capitalist society, or that to put an end to war it is necessary to finish with capitalism. But historically, and again today, the left is never confronted with war in general, but with real existing wars, specific wars, which succeed each other and do not always have the same nature. So, each war must be analyzed in its specificity. There are no slogans outside of time and space, which are valid for all wars. It is not because Lenin or Luxemburg or Liebknecht spoke of revolutionary defeatism or said that the enemy was in one's own country, that we can trot out these slogans for any war, independently of the context.

World War I was an inter-imperialist conflict over the distribution of territories, resources and markets. Those who refused to support their own imperialism were right. And history proved them right. The activity of the small minority of internationalist circles of 1914 led to strikes, mutinies, mass parties and revolutions. Yet since 1914 no war has been a simple repetition of World War I, and a simple repetition of the slogans of 1914 has not been enough. In all the wars of national liberation against the colonial empires, it was clear that it was necessary to support the insurgents who fought for

the independence of their countries. The same applies to attacks on independent countries by imperialist powers. So, in the 1930s, the left supported China against Japan and Ethiopia against Italy. And, closer to the present day, Iraq against the United States. This despite the fact that these countries were ruled by regimes that the left could not support.

In general, it is not obligatory for the left to take a position in the civil wars of other countries. But in some cases it is, on the basis of political criteria. Obviously, it was necessary to support Soviet Russia against the Whites and the imperialist armies that helped them. And in Spain from 1936 to 1939, without going into all the political complexities, it was a war against fascism where the Republican camp had to be supported against the Francoists, whatever one might think of the Popular Front government. And this would have been the case even if the Francoists had not been supported by Germany and Italy. Immediately after came World War II, which was much more complex (and more global) than the first. And which posed political and tactical problems that cannot be dealt with in detail here. But it must be clear that revolutionary defeatism and the enemy being one's own country did not fit there. It was not indifferent to live in a bourgeois democracy or under the Nazi yoke. Many European countries learned this from bitter experience.

The guiding line is to put ourselves at the service of the exploited and oppressed. Of those who want to liberate their country from colonialism or other forms of domination, or to defend their country against aggression. We must think in terms of peoples and classes, not blocs or spheres of influence, which are only vehicles for the oppression of small countries by the dominant powers. In doing so, we must give priority to political action and not geopolitical constructions.

The current war is in its essence not complicated at all. A country, Ukraine, which had been part of the Russian empire,

was invaded by Russia, the current expression of this empire, which it wants to rebuild. Whether you call Russia imperial, imperialist or whatever, it is indisputable that it launched the war with the aim of subjugating Ukraine to its will.

Even those who refuse to support Ukraine cannot deny the reality of the invasion. So, they find excuses. Yes, Russia invaded, but it was threatened, surrounded, provoked, so it had to defend itself. And they build a whole edifice to demonstrate that the war is really between the United States and NATO on the one hand and Russia on the other. And the Ukrainians who resist the invasion? Nothing but pawns in a “proxy war”.

In all this mess one could almost believe that Russia is a peaceful country, which has never hurt anyone. But, in reality, it is the most reactionary, repressive and aggressive country in Europe. And it is the heir of centuries of wars and annexations by an empire of which Marx always understood that it was the gendarme of Europe, of the peoples of Europe. As for Lenin, he never underestimated the reactionary force represented by Great Russian chauvinism.

In the European left, we can agree on at least three points:

- Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022.
- To resist this invasion, Ukraine received a considerable amount of weapons, mainly from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and especially from the United States.
- NATO has seen an eastward expansion since the 1990s, notably incorporating the countries that were previously part of the Warsaw Pact, as well as three former Soviet republics, the three Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

From these three observations, we can arrive at different, even contradictory, analyses and conclusions. But those who

seek to relativize or even deny Russia's responsibility for the war are forced to deny certain facts and invent others.

Russia invaded

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

Whether the invasion is against international law, however true that may be, is entirely secondary. The bottom line is that Russia, an imperial, imperialist, dominant power for centuries, does not accept that the republics of the former Soviet Union, independent since 1991, should escape its control. In particular, it has never really recognized the independence of Ukraine. It has always wanted, at a minimum, a government in Kyiv under its orders, without excluding the annexation of all or part of its territory. And it has said so more and more openly.

Ukraine had been part of the Tsarist empire, of the "prison house of nations". It was Lenin who characterized it thus and who also said: "What Ireland was for England, Ukraine has become for Russia: exploited to the extreme, without receiving anything in return." In addition to economic exploitation, there was under Tsarism the banning of the Ukrainian language and the repression of anything that could express Ukrainian identity, culturally and politically. After a brief period in the 1920s when Ukrainian language and culture were encouraged, the Stalinist counter-revolution brought a halt to it. Between famine and terror, the 1930s were a dark decade for Ukraine, followed by war.

Despite this history, a certain left would have us believe that if Putin went to war it was because of NATO's eastward expansion, which he saw as a threat and against which he was reacting.

In fact, there is plenty of evidence that Putin always knew exactly what he wanted, that he was not pushed or provoked by anyone. We can start with his famous observation in 2005, when

he said that “the disintegration of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century.” Geopolitical, not social. What he wanted (since well before 2005) and still wants is to regain control of the territory of the former USSR, which moreover corresponded more or less to that of the Tsarist empire. And it is this empire that he wants to rebuild. Not necessarily by annexing the former republics but by controlling them. And in addition, to regain the sphere of influence in Europe that Stalin had established in 1945. In this project, Ukraine occupies a central place. As Zbigniew Brzezinski, adviser to Carter and Obama, said: “Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire.” Because we must never forget that Russia is not a national state, but precisely an empire.

So, in Putin’s vision and in his plan there was no room for an independent Ukraine, especially since it was increasingly turning towards the West.

Euromaidan

Before February 24, there was 2014. The gulf between a part of the Western left and the Ukrainian reality already manifested itself then.

The idea that the annexation of Crimea was a reaction to the Maidan “coup” does not hold water. First, we can only speak of a far-right “coup d’état” or “coup de force” without taking the trouble to make a concrete analysis of a mass movement that lasted three months and of its evolution. And by replacing it with a *made in Russia* caricature. But the peddlers of such a caricature should no longer expect to be taken seriously. For those who want to understand, there are books, interviews with participants and articles that are easily accessible online. There’s even Wikipedia.

The same people who talk of a far-right coup in Kyiv explain that Putin annexed Crimea in reaction to it. But the

annexation of Crimea was discussed and planned before the fall of Yanukovych and the victory of Maidan. And not only Crimea. The whole plan to annex the eastern and southern oblasts, going through a phase of “people’s republics”, was also put forward in a document submitted for discussion in the Russian presidential administration between the 4th and 12th February 2014 and published in full by the newspaper [Novaya Gazeta on February 26, 2015](#). The newspaper’s introduction begins with a quote that says it all: “We consider that it is appropriate to initiate the accession of the eastern regions to Russia”. The document begins with three observations: the bankruptcy of Yanukovych, who was rapidly losing control of the political process; then the paralysis of the government and the lack of a body politic of interlocutors with which Russia could negotiate; and finally, that such an “acceptable” body politic was unlikely to come out of the scheduled elections.

Moreover, we were able to recently read the testimony of Bill Clinton, who recounts a conversation with Putin in 2011, where the latter said that he did not agree with the agreement that Clinton had made with Yeltsin. This was the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, where in exchange for giving up its nuclear weapons, Ukraine’s sovereignty and borders would be guaranteed by Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom. Putin reportedly said: “I don’t agree with this deal. And I don’t support it. And I am not bound by it”. And Clinton adds: “I knew from that day that it was just a matter of time.” Three years in fact, before Putin found the right opportunity to do what he had already decided to do.

To get the “accession” plan started, it was obviously necessary to be able to count on support from the population. In his speech before the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, where he already questioned the legitimacy of the Ukrainian state, Putin spoke at one time of 17 million Russian speakers in Ukraine and at another time of 17 million Russians. It is possible that he thought they were the same thing. And even

that he believed his own propaganda about the “persecution of Russian speakers”. But being a Russian speaker does not mean that you are Russian. One can be a Russian speaker and a Ukrainian patriot. This was already evident in 2014, even in the Donbas. And even more today. But there are many testimonies of Russian soldiers who were truly astonished to encounter the hostility of the inhabitants of the occupied areas. They had believed what they had been told, that they would be welcomed as liberators.

NATO enlargement

The equivalent of NATO in the Soviet bloc was the Warsaw Pact, established in 1955. East Germany – the German Democratic Republic (GDR) – which was part of it, ceased to exist upon German reunification in October 1990. But after the fall of the Wall in November 1989 and even before the first free elections in the GDR in March 1990, it was obvious that we were moving towards more or less rapid reunification. The question was: what reunification? One possibility was that of a united and neutral Germany. The other, that of a united Germany, a member of NATO, the preferred choice of the United States in particular. It was in this context that US Secretary of State James Baker, seeking a way forward, floated in conversation with Gorbachev on February 9, 1990, the idea that a united Germany could be a member of NATO, and that in return there would be a commitment that NATO would not advance one inch (“not an inch”) towards the East. Gorbachev mostly agreed. The day after. Baker put both possibilities to Kohl, who ended up preferring the second choice. We know how events went afterwards.

The whole edifice of this history of NATO, which supposedly promised not to expand towards the East and which broke its promise, is built around this little phrase from Baker, which is still subject to debate. A promise or a mere hypothesis? Concerning only Germany, or all of Eastern Europe? What is certain is that there was never a written commitment. Putin

himself regrets this, saying in his interviews with Oliver Stone that nothing “was written down...In politics, everything has to be written down”. Besides, even if there had been something written down, it could not have been definitive. Like the Budapest Memorandum... Diplomacy and international relations are not based on promises, oral or written, but on formal treaties. Which can also be violated, but this is rather rare, since if a regime systematically violates treaties, no one will want to negotiate with it anymore.

The only treaty signed was the “[Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany](#)” of September 1990. The signatories were the two German states, plus France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States. This treaty stipulated that there would be neither non-German troops nor nuclear weapons on the territory of the former GDR. It was respected.

On the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Wall, Gorbachev confirmed that there was no promise regarding NATO enlargement, that there was not even a discussion about it. But he added that the enlargement had been a “big mistake” and a violation of the “spirit” of what was said in 1990.

So this story of the broken promise, which is after all the starting point of the entire discourse about an aggressive and treacherous NATO, is based on a sentence from a US politician to the president of a country, the Soviet Union, which neither of them suspected would no longer exist less than two years later.

Not only did the Americans not see the breakup of the Soviet Union coming, they did not even want it. They were quite ready to deal with Gorbachev’s Soviet Union. President George H. W. Bush even initially opposed Ukrainian independence, [notably in his famous “Chicken Kiev” speech](#).

Let us look at the East-West relations at the time. Already in 1991, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) had been

created between the countries of NATO and those of the Warsaw Pact. In 1994, the Partnership for Peace was created, with the members of the NACC and a few others, notably Kazakhstan.

In 1993, Yeltsin wrote to Clinton: "Any possible integration of Eastern European countries into NATO will not automatically lead to the alliance somehow turning against Russia." In 1997, the NATO-Russia Deed of Foundation was concluded, which noted that NATO and Russia "do not consider each other as adversaries" and saw NATO enlargement as "a process which will continue".

All of this was happening under Yeltsin's mandate. This does not indicate an attitude of confrontation or a search for a weakening of Russia, rather a search for cooperation and integration into the international order dominated by the West.

Did Putin have a different attitude? Initially, there was no break with NATO. Putin was not against equal relations with the alliance. The NATO-Russia Council was established in 2002. Putin said the same year in a press conference with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma: "I am absolutely convinced that Ukraine will not remain in retreat from the growing processes of interaction with NATO. The decision is to be taken between NATO and Ukraine. This is a question that concerns these two partners". And in 2004, when seven countries joined NATO: "Each country has the right to choose the option it considers the most effective for ensuring its own security". At the time, Russia expressed some concerns, but did not really see NATO as a threat. How to explain the change?

Putin was convinced from the beginning of his first term, or even well before, of the need to restore order inside the country (by asserting his own authority) and to restore Russia to what he considered to be its place in the world. At first, he may well have thought that this could be done within the framework of good economic and political relations with the

United States and Europe and even with NATO. In reality, the West was perfectly prepared to have good relations with Russia. But accepting a Russian sphere of influence, as Putin understood it, especially in Europe, was another matter.

Putin began to adopt a more muscular discourse, [in particular in his speech in Munich in 2007](#). He took part in the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, raising his tone by questioning the legitimacy of Ukraine. Even after the lightning war against Georgia in 2008, Russia took part in NATO exercises in 2011. It was from 2014 that the rupture was consummated, following the annexation of Crimea and the intervention in Donbas. And it is also from that point that the anti-NATO discourse became systematic. The rupture took place not following the enlargement of NATO but following the use of force by Russia against Ukraine. And this use of force took place following the Maidan revolution, which far from being a coup was a profound movement, especially of the youth.

As far as Ukraine is concerned, Russia never accepted its independence, but was at first confident in its ability to influence politically the course of events by relying on Ukrainian political currents favorable to strong ties with Russia. We must add to that a systematic infiltration of the Ukrainian state apparatus, especially the security organs, the extent of which was revealed in 2014. The first shock occurred in 2004, with the so-called "[Orange Revolution](#)", in fact a mass movement against electoral fraud. Coming after the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia and before the "Tulip Revolution" in Kyrgyzstan, it was enough to worry Putin, who feared contagion. Hence the discourse on "color revolutions" supposedly guided by the hand of Washington. In Ukraine, Yanukovych's rise to power in 2009 seemed like a return to normal, but the next shock, the Maidan, was a bigger blow for Russia.

NATO enlargement took place quite quickly, between 1999 and 2009 for the most part. It certainly corresponded to the

interests of the United States, but probably more to consolidate its influence in Europe rather than to confront Russia. But we must not, as the Western left often does, forget what the most interested parties thought, those who lived in the countries concerned. It is clear that NATO membership corresponded not only to the wishes of the new capitalist elites in these countries but also to the will of the peoples. In Hungary a referendum saw more than 85 per cent vote "Yes" to NATO. There is no reason to think that NATO membership would not have had broad majority support everywhere. Simply because all these countries had been dominated by Russia for decades, and some of them, for centuries.

As for the "encirclement" of Russia by NATO, let's be serious. Just look at a map. The three countries with the longest borders with Russia are China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan, none of which are members of NATO. What there is today, from Finland through to Bulgaria is a barrier, a line of defense. And this line is a defense against Russia, not a threat to it. Putin is not afraid of NATO attacking Russia. Russia is a nuclear power, as he keeps reminding us, and no nuclear power has ever been invaded. What bothers Putin is not a military threat. It's quite simply that the accession of these countries to the European Union and to NATO is a way of definitively turning their backs on Moscow and gravitating towards the West.

Weapons for Ukraine

No one disputes the fact that Ukraine received weapons. What is questionable is the idea that this demonstrates that what is happening is therefore a proxy war between NATO and Russia. And for this to be credible, a story is invented where Ukraine has been armed and prepared for this war since 2014.

Before returning to this, let's look at the example of the Vietnam War.

What was the character of this war? It was obviously a war of national liberation against US imperialism and its Vietnamese auxiliaries, the continuation of the First Indochina War against France. Did Vietnam have support in its fight? Yes, it was helped by the Soviet Union and China.

Chinese military aid began in the latter period of the First Indochina War. Following the victory of the Chinese Revolution, between 1950 and 1954, this was considerable and very useful: rifles, machine guns, mortars, artillery pieces, etc. After the Geneva agreements in 1954, which split Vietnam in two, China did not want a new war. But when the Vietnamese took the decision to reunite their country by force, it continued to provide military aid, which was still very useful, especially in the first period of the war, from 1959 to 1963. China also sent troops to Vietnam, especially to defend Hanoi and its surroundings. At the high point in 1967, there were 170,000 Chinese troops. A thousand Chinese troops died during the war.

At the height of the war, Soviet aid began to play an increasingly important role in quantity and quality. Faced with the escalation of US intervention from 1964, the type of aid that the Soviets were able to provide played a crucial role, in particular in defending North Vietnam against US bombardments. This aid seriously increased after the fall of Khrushchev. On November 17, 1964, the CPSU Politburo decided to increase its support for Vietnam. This aid included combat aircraft, radar, artillery, anti-aircraft defense systems, small arms, ammunition, food and medicine deliveries. In 1965, the Soviets took a step further by sending surface-to-air missiles and fighter planes. In addition, Vietnam received about 2000 tanks, as well as helicopters and other equipment. The Soviet Union also sent about 15,000 military specialists to Vietnam. As advisers, but also, especially at the beginning, as fighters operating anti-aircraft defense systems. And also, occasionally as pilots. Which was less

necessary once 5000 Vietnamese had been trained as pilots in the Soviet Union. All this equipment and Soviet specialists were sent to North Vietnam. Some of the equipment subsequently headed south. But not the specialists. The Soviets wanted to avoid any escalation, and therefore took no risk of Soviet-American clashes.

US forces lost 4000 planes during the war. Without Soviet help, this would have been hard to imagine. The extent of Soviet military aid, but also Chinese, is striking. Obviously, they were weapons of the 1960s, less sophisticated than those of today. But, in the context, this aid was certainly more substantial than the weapons sent to Ukraine up until today.

The Vietnam War coincided with the Sino-Soviet schism. Relations between the two countries were execrable; in 1969 they even came close to armed conflict. Out of necessity, and not without friction, they were obliged to cooperate to help the Vietnamese. But each of them was trying to pull Vietnam into its orbit. Did all this change the nature of war? No. It was still a war of national liberation. The extent of Soviet and Chinese aid and the possible motivations of these two regimes did not change anything.

Back to Ukraine. I have appendix at the end of this article, a piece from the *Quotidien* in Luxembourg (based on the work of the Kiel Institute): a good summary of the arms deliveries. First observation: the weapons are indeed more and more heavy. But at the beginning, in February-March 2022, they were not heavy at all. At first the Americans, like the Russians, like almost everyone, thought that the Russians would quickly occupy Kyiv, Kharkiv and other cities, and that Ukrainians would at best wage a war of resistance in the west and a war of partisans elsewhere. That is why the US wanted to evacuate Zelensky to Lviv or even out of the country. Against all expectations, things turned out differently. The Russians were forced to withdraw from the north of the country. The Ukrainians had therefore scored a first victory. It was

important. Having shown what they could do, they were given heavier weapons, which they would need for the fighting in the east and south.

But some weapons were still missing. The Ukrainians had been begging for months for modern tanks before receiving them, and so far, not enough of them. They have had HIMARS short-range missiles (70km) since last year. Then medium-range missiles (130km) and finally, in May, the British long-range Storm Shadows. It seems that now they will also receive long range missiles from France. And only now do they have the promise of receiving what they have been demanding for months: F-16 fighter jets. In the meantime, they operate with Soviet-made planes (considerably modernized, of course) that they have received from Eastern European countries. Quite recently, Germany authorized the delivery of five MiGs that had been part of the air force of the GDR, a country that ceased to exist in 1990. Putin must have trembled...

US goals and actions

The United States has two concerns. They really want to help Ukraine to defend itself; they do not want to see it occupied by Russia. But at the same time, they are afraid of an escalation with Russia, which explains the slowness and hesitation in the delivery of sophisticated weapons. It is also possible that they wish to avoid a total military defeat of Russia for fear of the destabilizing consequences, preferring to let them withdraw gently or even let them keep some territorial gains. But this also depends on the balance of power on the ground. Nevertheless, if the blockages on the types of armament supplied tend to be lifted, albeit slowly, it is not only because of pressure from Ukraine and some other countries, but because of the behavior of the Russians. Except for the use of nuclear weapons, they do just about everything, including attacks against infrastructures and civilian targets, not to mention the crimes they commit in the occupied areas.

It should be added, however, that the slowness of deliveries from certain countries can also have a logistical aspect. Because contrary to what some campists/pacifists say, far from permanently militarizing, the reality is that after the end of the Cold War, most NATO member countries seriously reduced their military personnel and expenditure. This was particularly the case in Germany.

An examination of the period between 2014 and 2022 is quite revealing. We are very far from the image of a NATO that was arming Ukraine against Russia. During Obama's presidency, until 2017, the total arms deliveries by the United States to Ukraine was zero. That was Obama's policy. And since it was the United States that led the way, NATO member countries in Western Europe followed its lead. Poroshenko, then president of Ukraine, was present at [the emergency NATO summit in Wales in September 2014](#). He asked for weapons but left empty-handed. Only certain Eastern European countries, notably Poland, provided some weapons, but in small quantities. After some hesitation, Trump supplied Javelin anti-tank missiles: a first delivery in 2018, followed by others in 2019 and 2021. But the Ukrainians only received authorization in 2020 to deploy them to the front in the Donbas.

The Wales NATO summit was supposed to sound the alarm and push member countries to increase their military spending to two per cent of their GDP. It must be noted that the response was overall quite lukewarm. It took February 24 for that to begin to change.

Minsk agreements

Far from preparing for war, the response of the United States after 2014 was to push Ukraine towards an agreement with Russia within the framework of the infamous Minsk agreements, the application of which was subcontracted to France and Germany. These agreements had been imposed on Ukraine by Russia in 2014-15 on the basis of a military balance of forces

unfavorable to the Ukrainians. Beyond their inconsistencies and ambiguities, they had, according to [according to Wolfgang Sporrer](#), a diplomat working for the OSCE who was involved in the Minsk process, an even greater weakness. They were not getting to the root of the conflict. According to him, this stemmed from Russia's desire to exert its influence on Ukraine's internal policy and international relations: the fundamental conflict was that between Moscow and Kyiv. In itself, the Donbas problem was quite solvable. But for Russia the "republics" constituted a useful lever of pressure on Ukraine.

While refusing to send weapons, the United States and NATO did send military equipment – helmets, boots, bulletproof vests, night goggles, computer equipment, etc. But they did something more important: they provided training for the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). And in a serious way. During 2015, there were three major training programmes, led by the United States, Canada and Great Britain, respectively. In total, the number of Ukrainian military personnel who went through these programs was more than 70,000. So, NATO was ready to give Ukraine the means to have what it had lacked in 2014, a modern army worthy of the name. But not to provide it with the necessary weapons. If they had, the current war could have been shortened or even avoided.

In conclusion, we can say that the United States and, even more so, some of their NATO allies (especially France and Germany) still bear some responsibility for the current war. But not in the sense of pushing for war. Quite the opposite. They persisted beyond reason in treating the Putin regime as a rational, responsible and reliable partner. Yet the alarm signals were not lacking. From Chechnya in the 1990s, via Georgia, Syria, Crimea, Donbas. We can even consider that the softness of the West's reactions on all these occasions encouraged Putin to think that he could safely dare to invade Ukraine in 2022. Besides, it is even possible that if "the

special operation" had been as rapid as expected he might have been right...

The divisions of the left

The European radical left is deeply divided over Ukraine. It is not just an ideological battle but involves choices that determine political action. Not only does the left adopt different positions from one country to another, but often there are divisions within the left in the same country.

It is possible to identify three major currents: the internationalist current, the campist current and the pacifist current.

The first is clearly in solidarity with Ukraine. It supports the country in its war of resistance against the Russian invasion. For many, this also includes support for sending arms, but, at a minimum, support is expressed by clearly putting forward the demand for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine, unconditionally. And also, as much as possible, by providing material assistance.

The campist current considers that the main cause of the war, or at least an important cause, is the enlargement of NATO towards the east, which leads it to dilute Russia's responsibility for the war without necessarily denying it completely. In general, this current calls for ceasefires and negotiations. Without conditions and sometimes specifying on the current front lines. And it either refuses to support the sending of weapons or even calls for a ban on arms deliveries. Obviously, this position is objectively pro-Russian. Its result would be to push Ukraine into negotiations in a position of weakness. Some campists admit this, in the name of the primacy of the fight against NATO. Others hide behind calls for peace whose sincerity is doubtful, to say the least.

Being against war on principle, the pacifist current starts from the desire to end the war as quickly as possible. It does

not necessarily share the campist vision. But this is often the case, since in Western Europe certain peace movements date from the Cold War era and were directed against US imperialism and NATO. But whether it is out of campism or simply the sincere aspiration for peace, they often arrive at the same demands as the campists: ceasefire, negotiations, no delivery of arms.

Where do these divisions come from? Let us look at the campists first. Some comrades ask why we speak of campists. It must be said that there is a touch of irony. During the Cold War, there were indeed two camps: the Soviet camp, which called itself the socialist camp, and the western US-NATO camp, which called itself the democratic camp and was correctly called by others the imperialist camp. Today, there is no longer a camp that claims to be socialist. Nobody can regard Russia as socialist or even progressive and the countries which vote with it at the United Nations are just as indefensible, if not worse: North Korea, Syria, Iran, Eritrea, Nicaragua.

Quantitatively, the majority of campists come from Communist parties or were trained by them. Which does not mean that all Communists are campists nor that all campists are Communists. There is also a second source of campism, among those who opposed US wars after 1991. But whether before or after 1989-91 the result is the same: an ossified view of the world, ultimately dogmatic and sectarian. No need to make the concrete assessment of a concrete situation so dear to Lenin. In all circumstances, the main enemy is US imperialism. It is enough to apply this assumption to any situation, deforming reality as required. For example, by demanding the withdrawal of several hundred US soldiers from Syria, without saying a word about the Russian and Iranian forces and their active participation in Assad's war against the Syrian and Kurdish peoples.

True pacifists, unlike campists who hide behind calls for

peace, are something else. We may think that they are naive. In an interview with *Médiapart* at the start of the war, the French philosopher Etienne Balibar, a strong supporter of Ukraine, noted: "Pacifism is not an option". In fact, in a war, pacifism is never an option. Trying to end a war as soon as possible, regardless of the context, can lead to the worst results. On the other hand, in times of peace, campaigning against war in general is quite respectable, without necessarily being effective. Conducting campaigns of information and action against nuclear weapons is more than useful.

What characterizes the internationalist current in the face of war? To precisely make a concrete analysis, to define the nature of the war. If it is a war of national liberation or a war of national defense, then support to those who fight against oppression. Support to those who are oppressed and exploited and help to their resistance and their right to self-determination. In the specific case of the current war, it is a war of defense, national and democratic. The Ukrainian left is therefore a thousand times right to participate in the defense of its country. The real Ukrainian left, not the pro-Russian "left". In passing, we can again refer to Lenin, who is said to have been against the slogan of defense of the fatherland. This is inaccurate. In 1914 he was against the use of this slogan as a justification for supporting one's own imperialism. But not against the slogan as such, when it was a question of national wars, as he later made clear.

We might add that the internationalists are not giving lessons from afar to those who are fighting. We are currently witnessing campists and pacifists who do not limit themselves to calls for a ceasefire and negotiations. The Ukrainians are also called upon to make concessions, compromise and to take into account the interests of Russia. Campists are the worst and their advice is mostly given from the comfort of the countries of the imperialist core of the European Union. We

may wonder what political or moral right they have to do that. We are consoled by the observation that they have less and less respect and credibility in Eastern Europe.

Appendix: Ever heavier weapons

Le Quotidien (March 30, 2023)

Recent deliveries of tanks and long-range rockets illustrate how the West is adapting to Kyiv's needs.

From the start of the Russian invasion in February 2022, Ukrainians benefited from the first deliveries of weapons by the West. Between February and March, they received more than 40,000 light weapons, 17,000 manpads – portable surface-to-air defense systems – as well as equipment (25,000 helmets, 30,000 bulletproof vests, etc.), according to data from the Kiel Institute which has listed since the beginning of the war the weapons promised and delivered to Ukraine. Greece notably has sent 20,000 Kalashnikov AK-47s, the United States 6000 manpads , 5000 Colt M4 carbines and 2000 Javelin portable anti-tank missiles , Sweden 10,000 manpads , the Czech Republic 5000 Vz58 assault rifles and 3 20 Vz59 machine guns.

In an emergency, these lightweight weapons and equipment are easy to deliver, pick up, and move across the battlefield. Faced with fierce resistance in Kyiv and Kharkiv, the country's second city, the Russian army withdrew at the end of March to concentrate its efforts on the territories of Donbas and the south.

In April, artillery deliveries began (howitzers, rocket launchers, etc.), capable of striking behind enemy lines to reach ammunition stocks and block Russian logistics chains. There were delivered until the autumn 321 howitzers, including 18 French Caesar guns, 120 infantry vehicles, 49 multiple rocket launchers, 24 combat helicopters, more than 1,000 American drones, as well as 280 Soviet-made tanks, sent mainly by Poland, which the Ukrainian army is accustomed to using.

The armor arrives

Despite its withdrawal to the east and south of the country, Russia has been conducting parallel waves of air strikes (kamikaze missiles and drones) on energy infrastructure and urban centers, well beyond the front. To deal with this, the Ukrainians were asking for missile defense systems. The United States has provided eight systems, the United Kingdom six, Spain four and Germany one. Washington recently ended up agreeing to deliver to Kyiv its Patriot medium-range surface-to-air missile system, considered one of the best anti-aircraft defense devices in Western armies.

In recent months, trench warfare has taken hold in Bakhmut and Ukraine feared a major Russian offensive with the arrival of conscripts. Against this background, Kyiv got heavy and modern Western tanks, long demanded, in order to seize the initiative and get out of the war of attrition. Several Western countries promised at the end of January to deliver them: Washington announced Abrams tanks, London Challenger 2s, Berlin Leopard 2s, reputed to be among the best in the world. The green light from Germany has also allowed other countries to promise Leopard 2s, of which Poland has sent 14.

Until now, Kyiv only had Soviet-made tanks and lost a lot of them. Western tanks are more technologically efficient with more precise sighting systems, on-board electronics... On Monday, the first deliveries of armored vehicles by London, Washington and Berlin were confirmed.

Promised by the United States in early February, long-range GLSDB rockets were also provided, according to Russian claims not denied by Kyiv. Ukraine considers these munitions, with a range of up to 150 kilometers, crucial to launch its next counter-offensive and threaten Russian positions far behind the front lines.

Murray Smith Sunday 16 July 2023

Republished

from:

<https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article67205>

Photo of Internationalism in action, Welsh union members and politicians hand over supplies to Ukrainian miners in Pavlograd

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/ukraine-russia-uk-trade-unions-solidarity-support/> Photo by Mick Antoniw

Aye Venceremos – Book Launch & Anniversary Celebration, Glasgow Monday 4 September

“Aye Venceremos” describes the history of Scots 1970s solidarity with Chile. The 50th anniversary event involves speakers and celebration.

Hosted by Glasgow City Councillor Roza Salih – herself a refugee from Kurdistan – the launch of *Aye Venceremos* celebrates the story of Scottish solidarity with the people of Chile following the fascist coup in September 1973 – exactly fifty years ago. This is a story of action – no better demonstrated than by the workers of Rolls Royce East Kilbride, whose boycott of engine work effectively grounded the Chilean Air Force. It is also a story of refugees, political exiles many of whom had suffered torture and imprisonment, who found themselves in Scotland where they were welcomed by the labour and trade union movement and helped to

settle.

The event – organised by the publisher Calton Books and the author Colin Turbett , will feature short contributions from Chilean representatives, trade unionists and others. Details will be added here once confirmed.

This is a FREE event but tickets are limited to 50.

Monday 4 Sep 2023 18:30 – 20:00

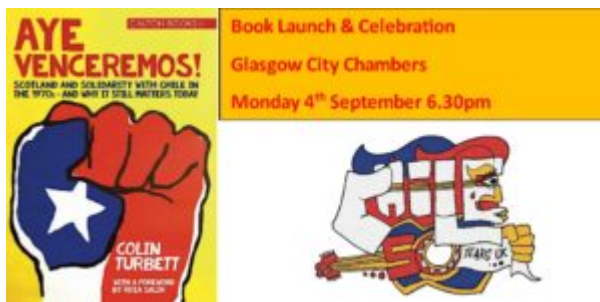
Location: Glasgow City Chambers 82 George Square Glasgow G2 1DU

Register here:

[Aye Venceremos – Book Launch & Anniversary Celebration – Glasgow 4th Sept. Tickets, Mon 4 Sep 2023 at 18:30 | Eventbrite](#)

***Aye Venceremos – Scotland and Solidarity with Chile in the 1970s – and why it still matters today* is published by Calton Books, Glasgow at £10. It can be purchased here :**

<https://www.calton-books.co.uk/books/aye-venceremos-scotland-and-solidarity-with-chile-in-the-1970s-and-why-it-still-matters-today/>



Scottish TUC President and Glasgow Councillor Roza Salih join European Civil Society call for EU to act for Öcalan

After 28 months with no contact with Öcalan, and in the wake of claims about poison threats, representatives from European civil society gathered outside the European Parliament in Brussels last week to demand that the EU and other European institutions abide by the principles that they claim to stand by – of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – and put pressure on Turkey to comply with international law in their treatment of Abdullah Öcalan. They demanded, too, that he be given freedom and the opportunity to negotiate a peaceful solution to the Kurdish Question, and they spoke of his importance as a thinker and how his ideas have inspired their own organisations. You can watch the whole event [here](#):

After a welcome from Xanum Ayu from Rojava, the first speaker was Simon Dubbins, co-convenor of the Trade Union Freedom for Öcalan campaign in the UK, who demanded to know what is happening to Öcalan. He pointed out that no other prisoner is kept in such conditions and that Öcalan holds the key to peace.

Antonio Amoroso spoke on behalf of the CUB, the Confederazione Unitaria di Base, which is part of the Italian tradition of grassroots trade unionism. He explained that his union applies Öcalan's principles of democratic confederalism, and that these ideas could help the European institutions too.

Michela Arricale, an Italian human rights lawyer, demonstrated

how passion can be combined with legal detail as she explained how the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) are ignoring a vital paragraph in their own rules when they claim that they can't divulge information on their visit to Öcalan's prison. The CPT are the only people outside the Turkish authorities to have visited İmralı prison since 2019.

Amedeo Ciaccheri is president of the Municipality of Rome VIII. He made clear that his message continued the tradition of support for Öcalan shown by the Italian people when Öcalan tried to claim asylum in Italy – though Ciaccheri himself was only young at that time. Italian cities, he explained, see the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan as their freedom.

(The organisers also received messages of support from the former mayor of Naples, where Öcalan was made an honorary citizen in 2016, and the mayor of Fossalto – also in Italy – where Öcalan was made an honorary citizen in 2020.)

Laura de Bonfils brought the support of her comrades in the ARCI – Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana, a million-member Italian cultural and social association – and the ARCI's demand for respect for Öcalan's human rights.

Txente Rekondo spoke on behalf of the Basque trade union, LAB, Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak or Nationalist Workers' Committees. He stressed the importance of a strong leader in a peace process; and he stated that the Basque trade unions support freedom for Öcalan and for all Kurdish political prisoners, and call for the Kurds to be free to decide their own future.

Mike Arnott is President of the Scottish Trade Union Congress, and brought solidarity from the Scottish trade union movement. He stressed that

the people of Europe demand that the European Union stand with the oppressed and not with the oppressor.

Roza Salih came to Scotland as a refugee from Iraq when she was a child, and is now a councillor in Glasgow City Council. She spoke of Scotland's history of international solidarity – including giving an honorary life membership of Strathclyde University to Abdullah Öcalan, 'a leader and philosopher and great thinker'.

Before a final word from Hakim Abdul Karim from Başur (the Kurdistan Region of Iraq), Jürgen Klute spoke as a former member of the European Parliament. He reminded the European Union of the need to increase pressure on the Turkish government to stop their war against the Kurds inside Turkey and beyond the border, to make peace with the Kurds, and to release Abdullah Öcalan.

Sarah Glynn, compering the event on behalf of the Permanent Vigil for Öcalan, observed that politicians are bombarded with different issues, but what had been discussed is a simple concrete campaign that can make a big difference.

(You can find the event briefing paper with a list of recommendations [here](#).)

Republished from Vigil for Öcalan:
<https://ocalanvigil.net/2023/08/01/european-civil-society-tells-eu-to-act-for-ocalan/>

Friends of the Earth Scotland video brilliantly exposes Carbon Capture greenwashing

How the oil industry is pushing Carbon Capture greenwashing
pic.twitter.com/bSR8oilicy

– Friends of the Earth Scotland ☐ (@FoEScot) [July 31, 2023](#)

Trade unions oppose Glasgow's drastic cuts in museums services

Glasgow City Council Unison's branch has launched a campaign against the SNP leadership of the Council's proposed cuts in museum services. Rallies are being held at the Burrell Collection gallery and the Gallery of Modern Art in the city centre (Saturday 5th August 12 noon). The rally at the Burrell Collection was addressed by Unison workers in conservation and collections whose jobs are at risk and also by representatives of the Unite and GMB unions at the Council. Below we publish the leaflet issued by the Unison branch – please support the campaign.

Shredding Services quicker than a Banksy Auction!

Banksy's Cut and Run exhibition, Mary Quant at Kelvingrove and the Burrell Collection winning the prestigious award of Art Fund Museum of the Year. These are just some of the successes Glasgow Museums have delivered this summer.

So visitors and tourists to Glasgow's Museums will be shocked to know that the city's Museums and Collections department, run by Glasgow Life, will see nearly a third of jobs cut with 37 posts from a total of 128 to be lost this year to save £1.5M.

The jobs cull affects the behind the scenes staff across Glasgow Museums and the City Archives and Special Collections staff at the Mitchell Library. Posts to go include Curators, Conservators, Technicians, Outreach and Learning Assistants, Collections staff, and staff from Photography, Editorial and Design.

The Museum Conservation department is being reduced by 40%. Curatorial staff and Collections Management are facing heavy cuts. Savaging cuts to the professional teams will result in a loss of skills, knowledge, creativity and essential care of Glasgow's world-renowned museum collections. Public programmes, displays, exhibitions and online content will be vastly reduced as a result. Losing the technical and specialist staff who prepare objects and loans, manage and move the collections, design and build the displays and temporary exhibitions will result in diminished public experiences, empty exhibition spaces and stagnant galleries.

A move towards the privatisation of technical and specialist skills is expensive and diminishes both the public offer and public purse.

Cuts to Glasgow Life's Open Museum and Learning and Access

provision will see a reduction in services to marginalized communities in Glasgow. Activities such as free facilitated weekend activities for families will be greatly reduced. Successful initiatives such as dementia and autism friendly programmes are much less likely to happen in the future. The cuts risk shifting a dynamic museum services towards spaces of elite privilege.

[UNISON](#) demands Glasgow Councillors stand up for Glasgow Life services, not pass on the funding attacks from the Scottish and UK governments.

We call on Glasgow City Councillors to reverse these devastating cuts to our Museums and Collections.

Our Museums and Collections are world renowned and internationally lauded. They need to be protected and cherished.

Want to vent a little?

We suggest you contact:

Councillor Susan Aitken (Leader of Glasgow City Council)

Susan.Aitken@glasgow.gov.uk

Councillor Annette Christie (Chair of Glasgow Life)

Annette.Christie@glasgow.gov.uk

Leaflet published by Unison, 84 Bell Street

Glasgow, G1 1LQ Tel: 0141 552 7069



Photos of protest rally at The Burrell Collection by M Picken for ecosocialist.scot



Climate Camp Scotland 2023 – report by RS21 members

*This year, Climate Camp Scotland set up on the doorstep of INEOS, Scotland's biggest polluter. **rs21 members** participated and here they report on the camp and lessons learned.*

From 12 to 17 July, the oil town of Grangemouth experienced a new sight. Tents were pitched, people wandered about with camping gear, and dog-walkers were making new friends. Climate and social justice activists from across Britain had come to

the town for the third Scotland Climate Camp.

Why Grangemouth?

Grangemouth is host to one of Europe's largest petrochemical facilities and ports, producing plastics, refined oil, and various other products. Much of the facility is run by INEOS, owned by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe. One of Britain's richest men, he is estimated to avoid around £4bn of taxes through 'residing' in Monaco. From 2013 onwards, Grangemouth workers have been [repeatedly victimised](#) by this management. This creates a site of near-cartoonish evil, that climate and worker organisers decided to focus upon.

On several occasions at the camp, local residents and workers spoke of the impacts of the port and industrial site. Workers are exploited, the community is made ever sicker by the port, and the wider planet is destroyed. On an evening walk to the nearby bay, those at the camp saw thousands of plastic pieces washed upon the shore, released by the facility.

It is for the above reasons that Climate Camp Scotland decided to focus on Grangemouth. The camps are structured to have several days of political discussion and training, and then a mass direct action at the close. In this way, people get to learn from each other, both technical skills and political analyses, as well as, in the end, taking action together. As opposed to actions done by a small group of activists, the aim is to get something akin to a 'mass' character – a space where community members, workers and environmentalists have all got to know each other and engage in resistance together for the first time.

The program

The camp this year began with an address from [Ecuadorian activist Leonidas Iza](#), leader of the country's biggest indigenous group. Iza led the 2019 and 2022 protests against the Ecuadorian government's austerity measures and rising fuel

prices, which disproportionately impacted the country's poorest.

His speech brought the urgency of internationalism to the camp. We must not only unite workers and environmentalists against facilities like Grangemouth's, but also be able to mobilise in solidarity with those globally facing the violence of capitalism.

The workshops were interesting and varied. They included a discussion with the Scottish histories of resistance project, which highlighted the importance of learning from past struggle and explored how our climate movement could be understood in a historical context. Fuel Poverty Action ran a workshop on their [Energy For All campaign](#), and how a shift to renewables could combat overpriced heating bills. A workshop on anti-fascism dug into how liberal discourse can be hacked by fascists to swing mainstream ideas on climate to the right.

In addition, an important workshop on the history of energy transitions looked at first-hand accounts from workers who experienced the move from coal to oil. The discussion explored what we would need to bring about a 'just transition' to renewables led by rank-and-file workers.

The artistic side of the camp was quite wonderful – a climate cabaret took place one evening, and another there was an impressive open mic. A band performed fantastic songs against police, billionaires and queerphobia. There was also an arts tent where people could make banners and masks of INEOS-mogul Jim Ratcliffe. The chance to meet other activists and swap stories was also an invaluable part of the week.

The action days

On Saturday the 15th, the camp geared up for action. Early in the morning, around 100 activists began the march from the site to the facility. As they attempted to exit the forest and walk towards the facility, police officers appeared en-masse

to block their passage.

This tells us something crucial about the role the police force has today. The police do not protect INEOS workers facing victimisation, they do not take on the billionaire owner who's avoiding an estimated £4bn in tax, they don't do anything for the Grangemouth community who are being poisoned. Rather, the police mobilise with force to protect the polluters.

What resulted was a pitched struggle where the marchers attempted on several occasions to pass police lines, with 5 being arrested for attempting to merely try and find ways to walk past the police. The march ended when police ruined the entire road system around Grangemouth, so they could kettle a series of people marching along the pavement.

Not all was lost. In all their excitement to harass and attack the protesters from the camp, Scotland's finest had foolishly left their flank wide-open. Having sent a significant number of officers to that end of the facility, they were not prepared for [another crew of activists](#) from the camp, who succeeded in entering the site unopposed by private security or the police.

Having succeeded in entering the site, these activists proceeded to occupy the roof of the facility's power station for seven hours, with a banner reading 'Climate Justice for Grangemouth'. The police force, terrified now that activists had succeeded to get on site, were forced to allow them off-site without arrest having recognised that attempting to remove them by force from the roof would likely end badly.

Early in the week, [activists on kayaks](#) had also succeeded in getting on site with a banner reading 'INEOS: Profiting from Pollution'. Finally, after the camp had packed up, [This is Rugged activists](#) further succeeded in getting into the site and blockading it with a series of actions lasting many days.

Ultimately, the forces of the state, despite their desperation to defend fossil fuel billionaires, have been revealed as incompetent. This also shows that we can be more impactful than we ever thought we could be.

Questioning the way forward

A core strength of Climate Camp Scotland is its experimental attitude toward its work. The camp relies upon an ecosystem of organisations, who provide everything from accessible toilets to facilitation of meetings, legal advice to delicious food. There is an openness to reflecting on what configurations would be most effective, and how the participatory democracy of the camp could be expanded.

One of the challenges of the camp was how to connect the educational aspect of the workshops with the action-oriented nature of the week. On one hand, a case could be made for focusing the workshops more closely on the imminent action: the skills training could focus on fence-climbing rather than tree-climbing, a history workshop could look at previous instances of direct action and what those achieved. Given that many attendees are new to this type of activism, allowing more critical engagement with direct action strategy could bring new ideas into the fold of the action.

On the other hand, climate justice depends on a lot more than direct action, and it's essential to broaden out the conversation. The mix of workshops was eclectic, but it catered to a range of concerns which all have a place in the discourse of activism. A camp with a pedagogical focus, separate from action, would also be a useful intervention in our movement. Given the police presence was particularly onerous after the camp's action, a safer space could be generated by separating camp and action. (By the end of the camp, there were allegedly 300-400 police officers on duty in the Grangemouth area.)

Another alternative would be to split the camp into different strategic pathways – a collection of workshops and activity which respectively focus on direct action, broader discourse and community outreach. The question hinges on how the camp could best enable more people to engage with climate activism toward a just transition.

Reaching workers and front-line communities

The camp's stated aim to 'build bridges between workers, front-line communities, and the climate movement' was more difficult in Grangemouth than Aberdeen the previous year. Aberdeen had [a community campaign](#) which the climate camp was able to support, generating solidarity with local people in Torry. In Grangemouth the route was less clear, although conversations occurred with local people across the week which point the way to building stronger relationships in future. The camp's media team drew connections between INEOS's environmental harms and its impacts on the health of people who live in its toxic vicinity. Conversations with locals were positive. During the march, Grangemouth residents were clear-sighted about the fact that it was the police who stopped traffic, not climate activists.

Although the climate camp is clear that we need radical direct action that isn't simply adventurist, but is actually linked to a mass politics of unions, activists, and frontline communities, that is easier said than done. Building those relationships is slow and difficult, particularly given the way mass media tend to distort environmentalist actions. [Brian Parkin's account](#) of the history of Unite in INEOS is essential reading to understand the necessity to go beyond the union bureaucracy in seeking to reach out to the facility's sub-contracted rank and file.

How can direct action link with the demands of workers and communities? It is worth thinking about how broad climate messaging could be supplemented with more practical demands. A

focus on energy bills, cancer rates, life expectancy, and the sheer practicalities of converting INEOS machinery to worker-controlled renewable energy production, must be hashed out and made tangible, if climate activists aren't to be rendered alien abstract beings by the mainstream media. The fight for climate justice is a fight for a better quality of life, locally and internationally. We need to make these material necessities feel real in local areas.

INEOS want to close Bo'ness Road and turn it into a private internal road for their facility, and [the community are against](#) the plan. If that campaign were to escalate, it would be a good opportunity to create the kind of practical solidarity we saw in Aberdeen. Further, just transition strategies need to be developed which will facilitate the agency of [rank and file](#) INEOS workers to figure out the shift to sustainable energy.

Climate Camp Scotland rose to the challenge of setting up in Grangemouth this year, and now the journey begins to incorporate the many lessons learned, so we can progress Scotland's climate movement further.

28 July 2023

Republished from RS21 website:
<https://www.rs21.org.uk/2023/07/28/climate-camp-scotland-2023/>

Ecosocialist.scot Editor's Note: RS21 – [Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st Century](#) – is a group originating in splits in the British Socialist Workers Party around a decade ago. ecosocialist.scot members also participated in Climate Camp Scotland and helped organise the tour of Britain by [Leonidas Iza](#). We will be writing about our experiences and reflections in future articles.

Hard Right Fails To Make Breakthrough in Spanish State Election

*Dave Kellaway writes for [Anti*Capitalist Resistance](#) on the general election in the Spanish state.*

On Spanish TV on Sunday night, you had the rather bizarre spectacle of both major parties claiming victory.

The conservative People's Party (PP) did become the largest single party but was 40 seats shy of a governing majority on its own. It is 7 seats short of a working coalition if it allied with the neo-fascist Vox (Voice). It had already done so in a number of regional parliaments after its clear victory in the May local and regional elections. Its leader, Feijoo, is proclaiming his right to try to form a government as the largest single party and denouncing attempts to stop him as blocking democracy. But he does not have the numbers and in politics that is what counts. It is unlikely that he can put together a coalition with Vox, which has called for the banning of nationalist parties, while at the same time bringing on board pro-independence parties in the Basque country.

Spanish State General Election Results, July 23, 2023

Party	% vote	seats	2019 %	2019 seats
PP (conservative)	33.1	136	20.8	89
PSOE (social liberal)	31,7	122	28.0	120
Vox (post/neo fascist)	12.4	33	15.1	52

Sumar (radical left coalition includes Unido Podemos, Compromis, Mas Pais etc)	12.3	31	12.9 (only Unido Podemos)	35 (=same parties as in Sumar now)
ERC (Catalan nationalist)	1.9	7	3.6	13
Junts((Catalan nationalist)	1.6	7	2.1	8
EH Bildu (Basque Nationalist left)	1.4	6	1.1	5
PNV (Basque Nationalist mainstream)	1.2	5	1.6	6

You need 176 seats to form a government.

On the other side, Sanchez, the leader of the social liberal PSOE (Socialist Workers Party), was exultant in his post-election speech. His party had won a million more votes than in the last general election in 2019 and two more seats. Opinion polls had predicted a significantly larger (+3% more) gap between the PSOE and the PP. The PP had centred their campaign on burying Sanchismo, organising a cultural war on his party's measures in favour of trans, gays, and women. The rise of Vox to its right has meant it has adopted some of its reactionary policies.

Sanchez had gambled by calling this early election; he could have waited until later in the year. A defeat could have meant a challenge to his leadership. Undoubtedly, the strident calls to block the Francoist revanchists of Vox helped mobilise a significant part of the PSOE base. He has indicated that he will look to re-establish his coalition government. Already, he benefits from the support of some Basque and Catalan nationalists. The PSOE really needs to get at least the abstention of the Junts Catalan nationalists. Despite losing a seat and seeing the PSC (PSOE in Catalonia) and Sumar do well in Catalonia, Junts could now have a kingmaker role. Their leader, Puigdemont, has been persecuted by the Spanish state

for his role in organising the unauthorised independence referendum in 2017. He is in exile in Belgium. The leader of Junts has already said they will not provide their support to Sanchez without something in exchange.

Yolanda Diaz, the leader of Sumar (Come Together), the new radical left coalition set up by her without the initial support of her Unidos Podemos leadership comrades, was also happy with the results. Sumar had just failed in its bid to beat Vox into third place and won fewer votes and seats than these components achieved in 2019, but it was a solid result that gives the formation some leverage in forming future coalitions with the PSOE. Yolanda claimed credit for helping to push back the neo-fascists, and certainly her campaign did mobilise around that issue.

Sumar, nevertheless, is far from the same political current that Podemos was at its height following the explosion of the 15M Indignados (angry ones) movement in 2011. Then there was a link between the new political current and a new, vibrant movement in the communities. Podemos wanted to replace the PSOE, not become its left satellite and coalition partner. In the 2016 general election, it was a point or so behind the PSOE at 21%. It argued then for a 'rupture' with the post-Franco regime established in 1978. Podemos was sympathetic to a radical new deal for the nations within the Spanish state and was anti-monarchy. Yolanda Diaz created Sumar as a further moderate iteration of a Podemos that had already moved right by becoming a coalition partner and taking ministerial posts. It represents the integration of the left of the PSOE into the institutions. Mobilising against Vox was important, but the anti-fascist campaign also helped to drown out any critical balance sheet of the real character of the PSOE/Sumar coalition. Some commentators on the left in Britain have tended to leave out this analysis.

During this election, Sumar put forward some more radical proposals than Sanchez, such as a large 'inheritance' grant of

20,000 euros for each 18-year-old. Such a measure looks positive, but it places redistribution within an individualist framework that does not particularly challenge capitalist society. The money does not alter in any way how resources are produced and distributed, unlike measures that take industries or utilities into common ownership. The left would not necessarily oppose such a measure; it involves some redistribution, clearly, but like universal basic income, it is a measure that the bosses can live with, and it even stimulates capitalist consumption.

Pushing back the neo-fascist Vox (which lost 3% of its votes but nearly half its seats) was a positive outcome of this election. It demonstrates that advancing fascism is combatable and that the hard right's takeover of Europe is not an inevitable process. Unlike Starmer, Sanchez vigorously defended his progressive legislation against the PP/Vox cultural wars, demonstrating that you do not have to give ground on these issues. For example, in its Valencian stronghold, Naquera, where it had banned the LBGTQ+ flags, it lost the majority it had won in the local elections.

However, Vox will continue to govern in coalition in a number of regions, and its base has been consolidated. The impact its reactionary policies have had on a resurgent PP is another way to measure its political success. The latter, despite failing to get a majority, is now the largest party and has mopped up practically all the electoral support that the neo-liberal centrist party, Ciudadanos, formerly enjoyed.

Today, Sanchez is looking to knit together a new coalition. One problem is that all the small nationalist parties (See: **Note*) that facilitated his previous investiture have lost seats except EH Bildu, the more left wing of the Basque parties. He really needs Puigdemont's Junts to come onside, but Sanchez is wary of conceding too much to a leader that he has done nothing to free from exile in Belgium. Junts are demanding an amnesty for Catalan political prisoners and a

referendum. It is not in a rush to deal with Sanchez, and they say they are unperturbed by a stalemate situation (El Diario, July 25). Already, there have been more Spanish general elections in recent times than elsewhere in Europe, and we could be heading for another one in a few months if no agreement is made.

The PP is desperately claiming some legitimate right to form a government as the largest party. After making a whole campaign around smashing Sanchismo, it is now asking the PSOE to allow it to govern. Apart from Vox, it is seeking the support of the moderate Basque PNV party, the Canary Coalition, and the UPN, a conservative party in Navarra. Sources suggest the numbers do not add up since the PNV has already said no. There may be some recriminations in the PP ranks over whether the alliance with Vox in regional governments had a negative effect on the general election.

The likely scenario is a new Sanchez-led coalition, which will be weaker given the surge in PP support, or new elections. Sanchez stated today that he is confident of rebuilding his coalition and that there will be no new elections. Feijoo's PP and Vox will focus on Sanchez's greater dependence on nationalist parties in order to mobilise conservative popular opposition to any new coalition. Despite Sanchez's reassurances, there could be greater political instability.

This election has confirmed a return to more of a two-party system, with the PP and PSOE taking 65% of the vote. It had fallen below 50% at one stage with the emergence of Podemos and Ciudadanos. It will be interesting to see how Sumar develops. Will it be able to consolidate its disparate forces into a coherent political current? Will there be democratic internal structures—currently it is organised in a top-down way through apparatus-to-apparatus discussions mediated by the personality of Yolanda Diaz? Will there be pressure for some of its forces to be absorbed by the PSOE? Can Sumar be a party or movement where revolutionary socialists can organise, as

was the case with Podemos for some time?

For people suffering from the cost of living crisis, poor or expensive housing, and deteriorating public services, the PSOE/Sumar government has not altered a great deal apart from some tweaks in the labour laws and progressive reforms on gender rights or on the historical truth about the Civil War. Abstention remains at 34%, which confirms the trend of recent years where many working people are alienated from the political system. The new situation, which is very polarised on the institutional level, is unlikely to change this. Building self-organisation outside of institutions to defend living standards and make social gains remains a key priority. The unions have been pretty much integrated into the government's reformism without reforms. Recapturing the dynamic of the Indignados movement and the political radicalism of the early Podemos current is more important than ever.

26 July 2023

Republished from Anti*Capitalist Resistance:
<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/hard-right-fails-to-make-breakthrough-in-spanish-election/>

**Note: The Catalan left wing anticapitalist group Popular Unity Candidacy (Catalan: Candidatura d'Unitat Popular, CUP) lost votes and its two seats in the Cortes, while the Republican Left of Catalonia (Catalan: Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, ERC), aligned with the SNP, lost 6 seats and fell to 7 seats, its lowest number of seats since 2011. The gainer in Catalonia was the PSC, the name the PSOE adopts in Catalonia. However, the left wing Galician Nationalist Bloc (Galician: Bloque Nacionalista Galego, BNG) increased its vote share and held on to its single seat and, as the article explains, the more left wing of the Basque independentist parties EH Bildu (Euskal Herria Bildu – English: Basque Country Gather or Basque Country Unite) gained 1 seat. [Note*

Marching to keep Wales nuclear free

Sean Thompson reports

Campaigners from Welsh anti-nuclear groups will march the 44 miles from Trawsfynydd to the Eisteddfod at Boduan next month in support of a nuclear free Wales and against plans to site the new generation of Small Modular Reactors that are under development at the decommissioned nuclear plants at Trawsfynydd in Gwynedd and Wylfa in Ynys Mon (Anglesey).

The march will arrive at the Eisteddfod on August 6 and a rally will be held there.

The march to the Eisteddfod site will take four days and along the way participants will run stalls, distribute leaflets, and host film screenings as part of their protest against new nuclear projects being developed in the north of Wales.

March organiser Sam Bannon from [CND Cymru](#) said: “In collaboration with [People Against Wylfa B \(PAWB\)](#) and the [Society for the Prevention of Everlasting Nuclear Destruction \(CADNO\)](#), this action will demonstrate our opposition to the rehabilitation of this unsafe, costly, and antiquated form of energy production that distracts from the goal of zero net carbon emissions and contributes directly to the production of nuclear weapons.



“In CND Cymru, we recognise the need for a rapid and just transition away from fossil fuels. And so, in showing our opposition to SMR’s, we are also advocating for a green new deal for Cymru. Harnessing the power of our abundant natural resources using truly sustainable means and investing in energy storage technologies, would without any doubt be cheaper, quicker, and safer as well as creating considerably more employment for people in Wales.”

The marchers have the support of [Welsh Nuclear Free Local Authorities](#), who oppose both the proposals for Trawsfynydd and Wylfa and the Westminster government’s plans to develop 24 gigawatts of nuclear power generating capacity in the UK by 2050.



Councillor Sue Lent from Cardiff, Chair of the NFLA Welsh Forum added: “Nuclear projects are notorious the world over for being delivered very late and way over budget. Bechtel and Westinghouse have been involved in the development of two new reactors at Vogtle in Georgia. Construction there started in 2009, yet only this year will both reactors come on stream, and the project is being delivered at a cost approaching US\$30 billion (£23 billion), over double the original budget.

“Wales has wind and rivers, and a long coastline. Imagine what could done with £23 billion, if it were invested not only in a national programme to insulate every home in Wales to the highest standard to reduce fuel consumption and energy bills, but also in renewable energy technologies to generate and store clean sustainable electricity from wind turbines, micro hydro-electric schemes, and from wave and tidal power projects, drawing on the natural resources with which our nation is blessed?”

“Instead of nuclear, we want to see investment in Wylfa and Trawsfynydd so they can be transformed into sites of engineering excellence for the development and deployment of renewable technologies and storage solutions.



“Wales can derive a lot more electricity far more quickly and at much less cost, without creating ugly new nuclear power plants that contaminate their environment, operate at risk, and leave a costly legacy of deadly radioactive waste in their wake. Let’s do this – let’s keep Wales nuclear free.”

Republished from Red Green Labour:
<https://redgreenlabour.org/2023/07/23/marching-to-keep-wales-nuclear-free/>

Photographs from: <https://www.stop-wylfa.org/>

Anticapitalistas (Spanish State) – Statement on the General Election to be held on Sun 23rd July

*Dave Kellaway of Anti*Capitalist Resistance translates the [Anticapitalistas](#) (Spanish State) statement on the upcoming*

general election (Sun 23 July).

The rise of reactionary political currents in the Spanish state is significant for the July 23 general election. This growth in political reaction is a global trend. The immediate factor behind this snap election was the electoral defeat of the progressive bloc in the May 28 regional and local elections, which changed the political situation. Although the results were relatively close between the PP (People's Party, the mainstream conservatives) and the PSOE (Socialist Workers Party, the traditional social democrats), the electoral arithmetic has generated a major shift. We saw the resounding collapse of Unidas Podemos (groups to the left of the PSOE but in full coalition government with it) and the decline of the PSOE, which led the PP to win many provincial capitals and Autonomous Regions. This changed the political cycle and led Pedro Sánchez to call a general election.

The reactionary turn in the situation has underlying causes. The first and most decisive is to be found at the international level, in a succession of defeats and capitulations of the left that emerged after the 2008 crisis and which have provoked the rise of a new right: from Syriza in Greece to the integration of Podemos into a government with the PSOE, passing through Corbynism or Sanders. The feeling that remains is that the left is not capable of consolidating stable mass projects or putting forward a programme that it can implement. So the crisis within the left is the first cause.

Another underlying reason has to do with fear: war, the geopolitical reordering of capitalism, and the ecological crisis generate a sense of the end of an epoch. Inequality is increasing in the countries of the capitalist centre; whole areas of the world are being thrown into chaos by capitalism; and new powers are disputing hegemony with the old ones. It is clear to the middle classes: law and order must be imposed within each country in order to be in a better position to

maintain relative privileges in a world in flames. The working class and the oppressed lack strong political organisations and do not have a strategic perspective to fight capitalism. But the rebellions continue, albeit without clear political direction: France took over from Chile, Chile from the black people in the USA... and so on and so forth.

In Spain, the transformation of Podemos into a more institutionally integrated and less radical force and the defeat of the pro-independence cycle have been the determining factors within the progressive bloc. The emergence of VOX (the voice of hard-right post-fascists) and the rise of the PP are the reverse of this pendulum. The progressive coalition government formed in 2018 was not the beginning of a period of great change. It was rather the end of the hope that 15M had opened up. [15th May is the name given to the Indignados movement, huge street mobilisations, and radicalisation that erupted in 2011 and led to the creation of the radical left Podemos-Tr] The progressive government has tried to promote a policy of modernisation of Spanish capitalism, which we have described as “reformist without reforms” Far from seeking a recomposition of capitalist society on the basis of a certain redistribution of wealth, they have maintained at all costs a policy that preserved corporate profits in a context of “Keynesianism without growth or redistribution”. Related to this policy, which reflects and feeds the current dynamics of capitalism, military spending is brutally increased, the pro-security reinforcement of the state is promoted, the terrain of protest is created, territorial autonomy is defended, and migrants are attacked.

In this sense, despite the big speeches, the progressive government has not fulfilled its promises in terms of legislation on labour reform, pensions, the gag law, housing, etc. It has objectively implemented a reinforcement of the authoritarian drift of the state on migration; it has aligned itself with Western imperialism, where it plays a subordinate

role (Sahara, the war in Ukraine, etc.). The government has applied the economic policy of capital: inflation has eaten into wages, and the working class is no stronger socially than when this legislature began. The great historic task of tackling the climate crisis has been postponed and handed over to big business, thus promoting 'green capitalism'. Even in areas where certain advances have been made, such as feminism and LGBTI rights, these are fragile and threatened, among other things, by the co-option and institutionalisation of social movements.

The rise of the right in the Spanish state is part of this context: insecurity about the future, hegemony of the old middle classes in the political field, reaction against the processes of social mobilisation of recent years. In a distorted way, this right has been moulded by its reaction to the progressive bloc. It feeds off the chronic crisis, the need to preserve order because change can only be imagined to be worse, and the structural weakening of workers' organisational capacity. The underlying negative process inexorably advances while progressivism suffers and agonises as it "manages the existing situation".

We do not want a single vote to go to the right. We do not want the Popular Party and VOX to get into government. But, beyond the individual vote of each one, we cannot close our eyes to the left parties' politics of renunciation, which have already demonstrated in government that they are incapable of fulfilling their promises and of confronting the economic powers in order to defend the interests of the working class. Where they exist, we call on voters to vote for candidates who express a clear position against the reactionary wave but also a rejection of capitulations and alliances with social liberalism and who defend freedom and self-determination. So we call for a vote for the CUP (a Catalan left independence current). This is despite our differences with them regarding their overly complacent policy with the rest of the pro-

independence bloc and on more strategic issues. We will also vote and build Adelante Andalucía (Forward Andalusia), which aims to build an ecosocialist and feminist current among Andalusian workers against the regime of 78 (the government that led the compromised and moderate transition from Francoism to Tr). It will highlight the secular oppression suffered by this territory.

On the 23rd of July, we will know what the new political framework is in which we will have to operate. If progressivism resists, the onslaught of the right will not cease, and we have no confidence that the necessary transformation will be undertaken. If the right wing governs, a redoubled offensive against the working class and the rights of women, LGBTI people, migrants, and all the exploited and oppressed is coming. Whatever happens, we will fight together with many more people. But resistance cannot be simply taking to the streets; the travails of progressivism are making it clear to us that we need a left independent of the regime, as loyal to the subordinate classes as the right wing is to the capitalists. This project for Anticapitalists is called ecosocialism, and it will have to be built through social resistance and also by drawing the relevant lessons on the political terrain: neither resigning ourselves to the lesser evil nor letting history continue to be dictated by the same old, same old politics.

Picture: CUP (Popular Unity Candidacies) Catalonia election banner: <https://cup.cat/>

Spanish State General Election Sunday 23 July – Can The Right Be Stopped?

*Dave Kellaway of [Anti*Capitalist Resistance](#) assesses what is at stake in Sunday's general election in the Spanish state.*

With under a week to go, the polls continue to give the mainstream conservative party, the PP (People's Party), a lead of four percentage points over the governing PSOE (Socialist Workers Party–social democratic). Sanchez, the current Prime Minister, may still scrape through, but it cannot be excluded that the PP may get a majority on its own–the electoral system disproportionately benefits the rural seats where the conservatives are stronger–but it is likely that it will have to rely on the support of the hard-right, post-fascist Vox (Voice party). At the moment, this group has many direct links with the fascist Francoist regime (Franco only died in 1975). This makes it less post-fascist than groups like Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia in Italy.

Already, Vox has gone into government with the PP in several regions following the recent elections. Open attacks have been stepped up on women's right to control their own bodies, against gay and trans people, and to stop the law on memory that helps provide the truth about the Franco regime's repression. It looks likely that despite PP leader Feijoo's election bluff at getting his own majority, he will deal with Vox to form a government.

As we see elsewhere in Europe, there is an interaction between the mainstream right and the hard-right post-fascists, whereby they both influence each other. The mainstream takes on more and more hard-right policies, particularly those linked to culture wars and anti-migrant racism. The post-fascists try to

look a bit more like the mainstream right wing by reducing and minimising their links with a fascist past, which keeps any militia-style organising well out of sight. Indeed, Vox, like the Fratelli in Italy or the RN in France, prioritises getting influence inside the police and army.

Party	% vote	seats
PSOE	28.2	101-109
PP	32.0	130-138
Vox	14.1	35-41
Sumar	14.0	34-40
Others (nationalists mostly)	11.7	32-40

Source: Simple Logica, July 17 (in El Diario)

Sanchez has gambled with this snap election. He could have waited until the end of the year. He hopes to take advantage of a reflex among progressive forces against the entry of the post-fascist Vox into regional and local governments. Maybe he thinks that he has a better chance of generating that reaction during the initial stages of the formation of these governments before the outcry dies down. Certainly, he is risking his political career if he is defeated. It is still too close to call, and it may all end with an unstable political deadlock that will mean going to the polls again in the short term.

The right-wing forces have benefited from the collapse and dissolution of the so-called modernising centre-right Ciudadanos party. The latter's votes have mostly transferred to the PP. Although there is much talk of Vox, the main increase in votes, according to the surveys, has been for the PP rather than the post-fascists. Vox is forecast to get fewer seats at the moment than the 52 it got last time. The PP, on the other hand, is predicted to increase its seats from 88 to over 130. The main focus of Sanchez's campaigning has been on the right-wing threat rather than proposing any sort of policy that will decisively deal with the cost of living crisis or

the need for greater social spending. Upping the verbal ante of anti-fascism and the threat to democracy did not really work in the last general elections in France and Italy. Maybe the massive increase in abstention and alienation from the political process makes such invocations less convincing.

What about those currents to the left of the PSOE?

Podemos was a political current that built itself on the radical street mobilisations of the Indignados 15M movement in 2011. Its founders included the revolutionary Anticapitalistas current. Its political programme called for a clear break with the existing regime and for a new arrangement for the nations (like Catalonia and the Basque Country) of the Spanish state. Its strategy was to build a new sort of movement quite distinct from the traditional PSOE or PP. Iglesias, its charismatic leader, called on its militants to overtake the PSOE at the ballot box. Now it has come full circle. It built itself on a different trajectory from the old CP United Left, which acted as a left satellite ally of the PSOE; some of its founders, like Iglesias, had personally broken with that tradition. Yet by 2018 and the victory of the PSOE in the general election, Podemos had jumped back on the old bus and fully joined up with the PSOE government. Podemos leaders had their ministries, there were many career openings for its cadres, and its apparatus could be consolidated. As day follows night, this turn logically meant that forces inside Podemos would complete the ideological trajectory towards more moderate policies.

So Yolanda Diaz, who was a deputy prime minister and a Podemos leader, launched a new political movement called Sumar (Come Together) and laid down an ultimatum to her comrades: Join me

in a new broader electoral coalition. Unlike the foundation of Podemos with congresses, motions, programmes, and debate, this new movement seems to be entirely built around Diaz. Podemos was never that democratic, but Sumar seems worse. Diaz's rhetoric about building a new progressive movement does not extend much reflection about the active involvement of activists in how their organisation is run. Melenchon's France Insoumise has similar problems with internal democracy, and this issue has been mostly unresolved in all the new left radical movements in the last decade. Syriza's leadership in Greece was able to ignore the majority position of the membership over its policies.

Despite quite a lot of rancour, especially around whether you were given a winnable seat on the Sumar slate, Podemos agreed to follow Diaz. The old United Left ally and an earlier moderate split from Podemos, Errejon's Mas Pais, were Sumar supporters from the start. Currently, Sumar is competing with Vox for third place on around 13–14%, which is roughly the score Unidad Podemos got last time. It does not appear that Sumar is tapping into any new areas of support. From its origins in Podemos, a new political current based on a movement from below and with a view of breaking with the system, Sumar has become mostly about fighting over which positions you can hold on to in the institutions.

The left campaigns to prevent a PP/Vox government; indeed, it defends the reforms made by the PSOE/UP government in the realm of democratic, labour, or LBGTQ rights. But it refuses to be silent on the record of this government—for example, Sanchez did nothing to stop the massacre of migrants in Melilla in 2022. Reforms to the notorious Mordaza or Gag Law are limited; it still gives police the right to interpret 'lack of respect' or 'disobedience'. The changes to the pro-business labour laws did restrict the use of temporary contracts, but much of the previous right-wing law remained on the statute book. The continuity with the PP's labour reform

is such that Mariano Rajoy, the right-wing prime minister who oversaw the law, told the conservative ABC newspaper that the PSOE and Podemos “left the labour reform where it was.” The reforms to housing law do cap rents at 3% and give some more rights to renters, but the government has done little to build more social housing.

Former Labour Party Prime Minister Gordon Brown, in an [article](#) in the Guardian, correctly warns of the international threat of far-right and neo-fascist forces. He shows how Vox is calling for nationalist parties to be outlawed and wants to weaken laws and policies on domestic violence. However, the whole article uncritically hails Sanchez as a champion of progressive forces. a defender of migrants (Melilla?) and an opponent of neo-liberal austerity.

Radical left currents that win seats in parliament do not have to go into coalition with social liberal parties like the PSOE. They can still prevent the election of right-wing governments and allow mainstream left-of-centre parties to form governments. In Portugal, the Left Bloc did precisely that while not going into coalition. It is also possible to negotiate around certain measures in exchange for your votes. At the same time, you can continue to develop a movement that defends workers interests with a strategy of a clear break with capital and its state.

Next Sunday's vote will make a difference in the conditions in which the left and progressive forces can operate. The right and neo-fascists must be voted against and stopped, but an alternative to the PSOE's slightly more liberal management of the capitalist economy needs to be built.

18 July 2023

Originally published by Anti*Capitalist Resistance:
<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/spanish-general-election-23-july-can-the-right-be-stopped/>

Picture: [Adelante Andalucía](#) an electoral coalition supported by [Anticapitalistas](#) are standing a candidate in the Cadiz constituency for the Congress of the Spanish State. Manifesto>> [here](#) (in Spanish/Castilian).

Uprising: the October Rebellion in Ecuador – Book launch Glasgow & Grangemouth Weds 12 July, online Monday 10 July

*ecosocialist.scot is pleased to be working with Resistance Books, Anti*Capitalist Resistance, and other organisations to bring the authors of*

Uprising: the October Rebellion in Ecuador

Leonidas Iza, Andres Tapia and Andres Madrid to Britain in July 2023.

PDF version of info below >>> [here](#)

Wednesday 12 July Grangemouth 8pm

The big public event will be at the opening session of **Climate Camp Scotland at Grangemouth on Wednesday 12 July at 8pm**. (This is approximately four miles from Falkirk, 25 miles from Glasgow/Edinburgh, 50 miles from Dundee). In order to attend

this you will need to **register** with Climate Camp Scotland – details are >>> [here](#)

Wednesday 12 July Glasgow STUC offices 3pm-4.30pm

A meeting will also be held **on Wednesday 12 July from 3pm-4.30pm** at the offices of Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), 8 Landressy Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow G40 1BP ([Google Maps](#)). Public Transport – nearest station: Bridgeton, 5 mins from Glasgow Central/Argyle Street; Bus 18, 46, 64, 263 ([SPT Journey Planner](#)).

This meeting is kindly hosted by STUC and will particularly focus on Trade Union Solidarity and Climate Justice issues.

Monday 10 July Online/London 7pm

The visit to Britain kicks off with a public meeting and book launch in London on **Monday 10 July** that will also be available to watch and participate online. In person details: Lumen Community Centre, 88 Tavistock Pl, London WC1H 9RS and on zoom <https://bit.ly/ecuadorbkregister>

Meeting sponsored by Resistance Books, War on Want, Global Justice Now, the Climate Justice Coalition as part of the We Make Tomorrow series, Plan C, and Anti*Capitalist Resistance

Buy the book >>> [here](#)

Organised by [Resistance Books](#)

About the book



UPRISING is a detailed description and analysis of the Indigenous-led uprising of October 2019 in Ecuador, written by three people deeply involved in the revolt. The lead author, Leonidas Iza, came to national prominence as one

of the central leaders of the rebellion. On the final day of the *paro*, when the movement forced the government of Lenin Moreno to withdraw Decree 883 and accede to live televised talks with the leaders of CONAIE, the main Indigenous umbrella organisation, it was Leonidas Iza who tore apart the arguments of the finance minister in front of the nation, giving him a master class in the implications of neoliberal economics and the government's deal with the IMF.

About the authors

Leonidas Iza is President of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), and is the best-known of a new generation of Indigenous leaders in Ecuador. He emerged as one of the central leaders of the October uprising, when he was President of the Cotopaxi Indigenous and Campesino Movement.

Andrés Tapia is Head of Communications at the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuadorean Amazonia.

Andrés Madrid teaches at the Central University of Ecuador. He is the author of *In search of the spark on the prairie*. The revolutionary subject in the thought of the left intellectuality in Ecuador.

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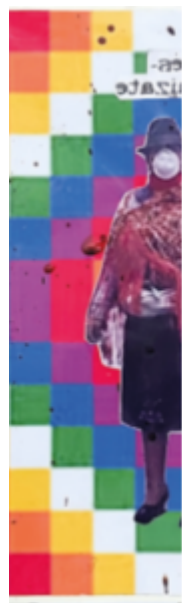
Recommendations

*The October 2019 rising in Ecuador was a sign of things to come, as estallidos, or uprisings, erupted later in Chile and Colombia. They represented a “people in movement” – the construction of a new kind of power from below, the merging of new forms of popular resistance with historic expressions of indigenous rebellion, all reflected in the collective voice of rebellion which this remarkable book presents. In the course of those October days, as one speaker puts it, “the everyday became extraordinary”, and a different future beckoned. **Mike Gonzales**, Emeritus Professor of Latin American Studies, Glasgow University*



This book is an account of a semi-revolutionary confrontation, written by one of its key protagonists, Leonidas Iza, who is now arguably the most important Indigenous leader in Latin America, and two of his

comrades. It combines a detailed, first-hand account of what happened, with a profound, Marxist analysis of why and how, and what social movements and the ecosocialist left can learn from it. Unmissable! Iain Bruce, journalist and writer, former head of news at teleSUR TV



BOOK LAUNCH

**Uprising: the
October Rebellion in
Ecuador**

With authors: Leonidas Iza,
Andrés Tapia, and Andrés
Madrid

19:00 (BST), 10 July
Lumen Community Centre, 88
Tavistock Pl, London WC1H 9RS



Not Coal, Not Dole! Just Transition & Climate Jobs – protest against Cumbrian Coal Mine Sat 22 July

There is a “Speakers’ Corner” public protest against the UK government’s approval for a new coal mine in Cumbria on Saturday 22 July noon. Details are below.

[ScotE3 \(“Employment, Energy and Environment – Campaigning for](#)

[climate jobs and a just transition](#)) and [Edinburgh Climate Coalition](#) are mobilising from the Edinburgh area, so you can contact them for details of transport. The West of Scotland is nearer to Cumbria, for many it's nearer than Aberdeen, but the only possible transport is by car. We are not aware of any other transport but will publicise details if we get any. Let us know at info@ecosocialist.scot.

Our friends in [Anti*Capitalist Resistance in England & Wales](#) have an article by Cumbrian activist Allan Todd on their website

>> [here](#)

and you will be able to get Allan Todd's new book "[Ecosocialism Not Extinction](#)" from our [Resistance Books](#) bookstall at [Climate Camp Scotland](#).

From the organisers of "Speakers Corner" Cumbria

Join us in Whitehaven on Saturday 22nd July, at 12 noon, to oppose the West Cumbria Coal Mine. We say: Not Coal, Not Dole! We want Climate Jobs and a Just Transition

*We are inviting Trade Unions and supporters to join us for the third Speakers' Corner event which will explore the themes of Climate Jobs and Just Transition. **Bring your Trade Union banners!***

Is it possible to campaign against the proposed coal mine while supporting jobs for local people and boost Cumbria's economy? We believe it is. Thousands of jobs could be created in Cumbria in renewable energy, transport, housing retrofitting, and other sustainable activities. We can not have our communities left behind but coal jobs are not the jobs for the future or the present. Local communities shouldn't be held to ransom by West Cumbria Mining Ltd which is 82% owned by a Capital Investment company registered in

Singapore!

Join us at the site to hear from great speakers talking about the prospect of Climate Jobs for Cumbria and a Just Transition for the area as an alternative to the coal mine.

More [information by South Lakes Action on Climate Change](#) about the mine and why we oppose it.

Speakers TBC. **You can also share and invite friends on the [Facebook event](#).**

Meeting point: Outside the Marchon site, Whitehaven. On Wilson Pit Road, near junction with High Road. SatNav: 54°31'25.6"N 3°35'35.6"W. [Click here for Google map pindrop](#). More information about parking will be shared closer to the date.

Travel: Note that the RMT union has announced a train strike for 22nd July. We are still going ahead with the event but you won't be able to travel by train. You will have to travel by vehicle to the event. We will try coordinate and support attendees with their travel arrangements.

Direction: Arrive via the A595, as if heading for Whitehaven. Stay on that road until you see a road off [R., if travelling from the north; L., if travelling from the south], signed: 'St. Bees/Sandwith' – this is Mirehouse Road. Travel along this until you meet the B5345: turn L. onto St. Bees Road, and then, almost immediately, take the first R. on to Wilson Pit Road. The coalmine site is on the L., next to West Coast Composting (Wilson Pit Yard). SatNav: CA28 9QJ. Note there are limited parking near the site.

Accommodation: You may also want to stay over if you are travelling for far afield so you may want to book campsite/accommodation early. So far we haven't made arrangements to support people with accommodation but we will explore accommodation with local people and other options.

We are also hoping on the day to also carry out some outreach/door knocking activity in the local area and hold a social/film event tbc. More information soon.

From ScotE3

Solidarity with stop the Cumbrian Coal Mine Campaigners

- *Keep the carbon in the soil: Scientists across the globe are clear that if we are to prevent catastrophic global warming then we can't continue to develop new oil fields and dig new coal mines.*
- *Coal energy has the highest carbon footprint of all energy types.*

In December 2022 the Westminster government gave the green light for the development of a new coal mine at Whitehaven on the Cumbrian coast. The decision flies in the face of statements made by the Tories took while the UK hosted COP 26 in Glasgow. But post-COP and during an ongoing cost of living crisis their mantra has become 'energy security'. This apparently justifies opening a new licensing round for North Sea oil and gas, massive investment in nuclear and a U-turn on coal. As we write this it looks likely that the Tories will use their majority in the House of Commons to strike out a Lords amendment that would ban all new coal mining.

The new mine is intended to supply coal that can be processed into coke for use by the UK steel industry. Tory ministers argue that coke is essential for steel production and that domestic production will cut the carbon emissions resulting from the transportation necessary for imported coal. But the focus of the two major UK steel producers is on decarbonising steel production by using green hydrogen, moreover the Cumbrian coal is unsuitable for steel production:

'The UK steel industry has been clear that the coal from the West Cumbria mine has limited potential due to its high sulphur levels," said Chris McDonald, chief executive of the Materials Processing Institute, which serves as the UK's national centre for steel research.'

So, in reality, the government's arguments are simply a poor attempt at greenwashing. It's estimated that if the project goes ahead around 83% of the 2.8 million tonnes of coal extracted each year will be exported. They talk about it

being a Net Zero coalfield. It's the same sleight of hand as they use to argue that the North Sea will become a Net Zero oil and gas producing area. You electrify the industrial processes required for extraction, offset other emissions and don't count the carbon embedded in the coal (or oil) because that's the responsibility of the end user! All in all It looks like the government's coalition to go ahead is an entirely political strategy aimed at pushing back genuine action on climate in favour of the big corporate interests that dominate energy production.

Lord Deben, Tory chair of the UK Climate Change Committee stated in June 2022 that:

'As far as the coal mine in Cumbria is concerned, let's be absolutely clear, it is absolutely indefensible. First of all, 80% of what it produces will be exported, so it is not something largely for internal consumption. It is not going to contribute anything to our domestic needs in the terms we're talking about, the cost of energy and the rest.'

The other argument used by ministers, however, is one that we do need to take seriously. Whitehaven is a one-time coal and iron mining town and currently has high levels of deprivation. Proponents of the mine say that it will guarantee 500 jobs for 50 years. Putting the investment required for the mine into almost any other form of local economic activity would produce more jobs and certainly investing in renewables in the Whitehaven area would provide, more and more long-term sustainable jobs. But while local people have no faith in their being such investment the pull of the mine remains attractive.

Two court cases aimed at stopping the mine are due to be heard near the end of October 2023. In the meantime, a coalition of national and local environmental organisations are organising resistance. On Saturday 22nd July there will be a day of action in Whitehaven with a rally, leafletting

and door to door conversations with local people.

We want to coordinate solidarity contingents from Scotland. If you are able to join It would be very helpful if you could answer these three questions.

I am interested in joining the delegation to Whitehaven on 22nd July.

I could provide a car and take passengers.

If it's an option, I would prefer to stay overnight and return on Sunday 23rd.

Please reply to triple.e.scot@gmail.com (you can use the [contact form](#) on the ScotE3 if you wish) and cc edinburghclimatecoalition@gmail.com

<https://scote3.net/2023/06/23/climate-jobs-not-coal-or-dole/>

Aberdeen: Occupation of Edinburgh offices in support of Torry community

Activists occupy tree outside Edinburgh offices in support of Torry community in Aberdeen. Press statement from This is Rigged.

Ironside Farrar, Environmental Consultants with offices in

Edinburgh, Glasgow and Manchester were commissioned by Energy Transition Zone Ltd (ETZ Ltd) to produce a 'Masterplan' for the industrial development of parts of [St. Fittick's Park](#), Gregness and Doonies Farm in Aberdeen. They were also tasked with obtaining Planning Permission for this development. Ironside Farrar's plans were presented to the Aberdeen City Council Management Planning Committee yesterday morning (29th June). The Council say they will adopt the 'Masterplan' as Planning Guidance.

On the same day, supporters of This Is Rigged went to the Edinburgh offices of Ironside Farrar and met with Julian Farrar, Managing Director of the company, to discuss the issues and request that Ironside Farrar withdraw from further work for ETZ Ltd, and that employees boycott all further work for ETZ Ltd for the following reasons:

St Fittick's park is the last remaining green space in Torry, which is one of the country's most deprived communities, where residents have a life expectancy ten years lower than people living in wealthier parts of Aberdeen. Commenting on the potential loss of the park, local doctors and nurses fighting to improve the health of the Torry community, say that industrialising any part of St. Fittick's Park will be devastating for the health of that community.

In addition to its positive contribution to human health, St. Fittick's Park is an oasis for wildlife, including many species of migrating birds, and Gregness and Doonies Farm support this wildlife as green corridors. In a recent article in the Guardian, journalist Tom wall suggested the park's wetland is "perhaps Aberdeen's most unlikely beauty spot. Reeds flap and bend in blasts of salt-edged wind. Grey and blue light catch in watery beds, where ducks dip and preen. Birds shelter in a young woodland of oak, dark green pine and silvery birch trees."

It therefore makes no sense to destroy this important habitat

while Scotland is in the midst of a biodiversity crisis. Furthermore, the wetlands and forest created 10 years ago in St. Fittick's Park are already capturing carbon, and it is increasingly recognised that ecosystems like these even regulate local climate including rainfall.

The main purposes of the proposed Energy Transition Zone will be to develop carbon capture and hydrogen technologies, both of which are considered by leading scientists to be unproven and dangerous excuses for continued oil extraction and habitat destruction.

In yesterday's meeting, Julian Farrar was warned that being complicit in destroying the wetlands and woodland, both of which are vitally important green spaces and biodiversity sites that have taken years and a tens of thousands of community man-hours to create, would be seen as an act of immeasurable violence.

Ishbel Shand, member of the Friends of St.Fittick's Park campaign said,

"The proposed industrial development is simply a land grab by the oil and gas industry to fill the pockets of their shareholders and directors."

After leaving the meeting with Julian Farrar, This is Rigged activists Mike Downham and Tom Johnson decided to occupy a small tree outside the Ironside Farrar offices, and are there awaiting a response.

Mike Downham, a retired paediatrician and children's DR said,

"There is a high incidence of asthma in children in Torry due to particulate matter air pollution from the nearby incinerator and the South Harbour industrial development. Further industrial development in this community would have a serious negative impact on the health of children in Torry."

Following the meeting, Tom Johnson, a painter-decorator and This is rigged supporter who knows St. Fittick's park well said,

"If Ironside Farrar were to pull out of the project at this stage, it would have a huge positive effect on the wellbeing and health of the Torry community – disempowered folk who have lost so much already. I mean, Imagine losing an entire bay – your access to the sea. And now forests they planted 10 years ago are to be ripped up and concreted over with "green" factories."

"Julian Farrar explained to me that Ironside Farrar have reduced the amount of harm to be done in the park, but if they now come out against any destruction WHATSOEVER of these spaces, that will be a really bold statement of solidarity, and an action that shows their real concern for the environment, and people. We understand it's difficult for a company to do something like that in current economic and political contexts, but to me Julian did seem to be uncomfortable with what's going on with the ETZ."

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