

Socialists contest Glasgow Council By-election

The Scottish Socialist Party is standing George MacDougall in a Glasgow Council by-election, *writes Mike Picken.*

The by-election in the Linn Ward, on the south east edge of Glasgow, takes place on Thursday 17 November and is caused by the death of a Labour councillor, Malcolm Cunning, a former leader of the Labour group reelected only in May.

At the heart of the Linn ward is the vast Castlemilk area – a remote housing scheme/estate established in the post-war period. At a well attended SSP election meeting on 8 November in the heart of Castlemilk, socialist candidate George MacDougall explained that poverty is a massive challenge in Castlemilk, particularly due to its remoteness and lack of infrastructure with few shops or cultural facilities, no rail station and a poor and expensive bus service. Housing standards are varied but some older tenements are afflicted with inadequate insulation and damp. George has lived in the area and explained that it had a strong community ethos with a previous local group, Castlemilk Against Austerity, campaigning for improvements and standing independent candidates in the elections with some success. During its successful early period twenty years ago the SSP won around 13% of the vote in Castlemilk.

The SSP campaign is focussing on the need to unite working class communities against the Tory UK government and point out the inadequacy of the response of parties in the Scottish Parliament – SNP, Labour and Green. SSP Industrial Organiser, Richie Venton, told the public meeting that the SSP demands were to “End Fuel Poverty” by cutting energy bills and calling for the nationalisation of the entire energy system. Venton explained that the SSP demanded a ‘Socialist Green New Deal’

that involved challenging the Tory government at Westminster and demanding the Scottish Parliament and Scottish councils campaign for a massive insulation programme with retrofitting of working class homes, combined with a move to clean green energy, an end to fossil fuel extraction and free public transport to end reliance on private cars and reduce pollution. While these demands are massively popular across Scotland, none of the parties in the Scottish Parliament are prepared to confront the Tory government at Westminster to get them implemented.

The SSP also called for massive solidarity with those workers currently struggling against the Tory wage cuts and cost-of-living crisis. A highlight of the public meeting was a speech by Gordon Martin, the RMT union Scottish Organiser. The RMT has been leading the battle across Britain to defend wages through strike action on the railways. Martin explained that although the strike action had been temporarily suspended following recent developments by the Rail Delivery Group employers, the RMT was still committed to a further ballot for strike action in the event of no reasonable inflation-matching offer on pay and conditions coming forward. Also addressing the meeting was Melanie Gale, an NHS nurse and workplace representative of the GMB union. She spoke about the struggle in the health service for decent pay and welcomed the likelihood of industrial action by the RCN and other unions (two small health unions in Scotland had already voted for strike action, while the RCN Scotland confirmed on 9 November they had also voted for strikes). Melanie demanded the SNP/Green government in Holyrood put their money where their mouth was and come forward with a pay offer that matches inflation.

The by-election takes place under the transferable vote system used in Scottish councils, so there is no question of the SSP 'splitting' the left or pro independence vote. There are nine candidates in the by-election, including not just the five

parties at Holyrood (Labour, SNP, Green, LibDem and Tory) but also the Alba Party, a largely reactionary splinter from the SNP, and the ultra conservative UKIP and Freedom Alliance parties.

This by-election marks a welcome return by the SSP to contesting elections and providing a voice for working class politics of solidarity, socialism and environmentalism. While it is unlikely to make a major breakthrough in terms of numbers of votes at this stage, as the SSP has not stood in an election in the area for 12 years, the SSP campaign focusses on key class issues of the day. To help the SSP election campaign use [this form](#) to contact them.



Gordon Martin, RMT Scotland organiser addresses SSP election meeting in Castlemilk, 8 November

Solidarity with Nicaraguan

people – Scotland's role

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One of the important lessons of both the Nicaraguan FSLN and the FMLN in El Salvador had been recognising the common grounds for uniting in struggle.

In the context of the popular struggles world wide and

particularly in Latin America again today, it should be a priority to defend democratic and human rights against what can be referred to as the [Orteguista dictatorship regime](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Part of the consolidation of the revolutionary process and the best way for a legitimate international profile was the first democratic presidential election that confirmed the Sandinista popular liberation victory.

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

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

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

Norman Lockhart, October 2022

Image from <https://correspondenciadeprensa.com/>

Solidarity with the protest movement in Iran!

Statement of the [Executive Bureau](#) of the [Fourth International](#)
Since 16 September Iran has been thrown into turmoil by widespread protests against the policies of the ruling clique. They were triggered by the brutal murder of the young woman Jîna (Mahsa) Amini, who was beaten to death by the "morality police". The duration and the expansion of the demonstrations to all parts of the country and almost all strata of the population testify to a deep-seated discontent and anger that

goes beyond rejection of the regime's deeply restrictive dress code for women. The causes also lie in a social plight that has been worsening for years for large sections of the population and in massive repression.

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

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

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

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

The second specificity of today's wave of protest is that it

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

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

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

We therefore call for:

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

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

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

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

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

Woman, life, freedom!

Zan, Zendegi, Azadi

Jin, Jiyan, Azadi

18 October 2022

Executive Bureau

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Photo: Uprising in Tehran Sept 2022 Copyright Darafsh /
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After the floods, Pakistan needs reparations, not charity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The empirical evidence overwhelmingly supports the view that a

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



By Farooq Tariq

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

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

by Resistance Books, [here](#) and [here](#).



Original Source : [New Internationalist](#)

Imagining an Independent Wales

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Video originally published here: [Imagining an Independent Wales – Melin Drafod](#)

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

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



**Radical Independence
Campaigners to protest at UK**

Supreme Court in London

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

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

There is a Facebook event page here:

[Let The People Decide! | Facebook](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Radical Independence Campaign

Another Scotland Is Possible

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

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

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

From our friends at [Climate Camp Scotland](#) ...

Hey there campers!

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

Meet & Camp Out @ the Kelpies, 15 Oct

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

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

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

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

[To get a briefing with venue details, travel info, and how to take part click here.](#)

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

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

Autumn love and solidarity,

[*Climate Camp Scotland*](#)

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

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

The leaflet advertising the meeting is available in PDF form [here](#) and reproduced below. The Facebook event is [here](#).

Solidarity with Ukraine! **Solidarity with the Workers of Ukraine!**

Public Meeting:

10.30am, Saturday 22nd October

John Smith House 145-165 West Regent St. Glasgow

Speakers from the recent Ukraine Solidarity Campaign delegation to Ukraine:

- Chris Ford (Ukraine Solidarity Campaign)**
- Alena Ivanova (Another Europe is Possible)**

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

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

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

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

Ukrainians bravely fighting for?

A recent USC solidarity delegation to Ukraine met with trade unions and left groups in Ukraine. It discussed recent developments in the war, workers rights and the future reconstruction of Ukraine. Organisations met by the delegation included:

The Federation of Trade Unions; the Confederation of Free Trade Union; the State Employees Union; the NGPU Miners Union; the Free Trade Union of Rail Workers; the Education Workers Union; Sotsiyalnyi Rukh and the Social-Democratic Platform.

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

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

Ukraine Solidarity Campaign (Scotland): [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland |Facebook](#)

Ukraine Solidarity Campaign National Website: <https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org>

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



Ukraine Solidarity Campaign (Scotland) - Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland - Facebook
 Ukraine Solidarity Campaign National Website - <https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org>

Solidarity with Ukraine!
Solidarity with
the Workers of Ukraine!

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

The war in Ukraine continues to dominate headlines. Ukraine's civilian-sufferers, Putin's escalating military, and subsequent Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine, and Putin's military escalation. The focus of the media is generally on the extreme cost to human lives and the Ukrainian economy as a result of the Russian invasion. But Ukraine's labour movement is not just fighting at the front. It is also fighting to defend and extend rights and protections for all. As it struggles to continue to fund its military resistance, the Ukrainian government and Parliament has also proposed emergency measures immediately re-evaluating employment rights.

With rising inflation, energy insecurity and the urgent need for more military and humanitarian support, Ukraine needs our solidarity more than ever. At the same time, global powers are already talking demands about reconstruction and granting their agencies. But what kind of Ukraine are Ukrainians bravely fighting for?

A recent ILOC solidarity delegation to Ukraine met with trade unions and left groups in Ukraine. It discussed recent developments in the war, workers rights and the future reconstruction of Ukraine. Organisations met by the delegation included:

The Federation of Trade Unions, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the State Employees Union, the NSPBU Miners Union, the Free Trade Union of Rail Workers, the Education Workers Union, Ruzhynskii Rukh and the Social-Democratic Platform.

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

Organised by members including: [Emma Campbell](#), [DICK WILSON](#) and [DICK WILSON](#) who are affiliated to the ILO of a national level. Affiliates to National website head GMB, UNITE, RMT and ASLEF members. Organised a speaker from the ILOC (bookmarks to your library meeting, it will)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kurdish name.

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

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

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

Amini’s death has seen Kurdish slogans calling for women’s liberation and revolution echo around the world. “Jin, jîyan, azadî” – and its translations – has reverberated through crowds and demonstrations held in solidarity with freedom-seeking women in Iran. Even in Afghanistan [women chanted the slogan](#), despite attacks on demonstrators by the Taliban.

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

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

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

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

Meral Çiçek is a Kurdish political activist and journalist.

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End of the Nightmare in Brazil?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 October 2022

Michael Löwy, activist of the [Fourth International](#), is an ecosocialist, sociologist and philosopher. Born in 1938 in São Paulo (Brazil), he has lived in Paris since 1969. Research director (emeritus) at the CNRS and professor at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales, he is the author of numerous books published in twenty-nine languages,

including *The Marxism of Che Guevara*, *Marxism and Liberation Theology*, *Fatherland or Mother Earth?* and *The War of Gods: Religion and Politics in Latin America*. He is joint author (with Joel Kovel) of the International Ecosocialist Manifesto. He was also one of the organizers of the first International Ecosocialist Meeting, in Paris, in 2007.

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Global Day of Action for Climate Justice called for Saturday 12 November

The newly launched COP27 Coalition has called a decentralised Global Day of Action for Climate Justice on **Saturday 12 November 2022** and for the reset of climate talks ahead of COP27 in Egypt. Demonstrations and protests have already been called by Climate Justice Coalitions across Britain and Ireland as part of the Day of Action – a full list will be published shortly, but major events are already planned for London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Belfast and other big cities.

Below is the statement launching the Day of Action. Further information can also be obtained by joining the mailing list, just send a message to the **COP27 Mobilisations working group**: cop27-mobilisations-subscribe@lists.riseup.net

Newly-launched COP27 Coalition calls for global mass action for climate justice, reset of climate talks ahead of Egypt COP

15 September 2022: Civil society groups from Egypt, African countries and the Arab world have come together to call for a global mass mobilization of people everywhere to address the root cause of the climate crisis and other injustices, to take place around the world during the COP27 global climate talks this November.

Today, they are launching the 'COP27 Coalition' with an invitation to civil society groups around the world to join them in demanding an end to climate and other injustices, and an urgent response from governments and leaders to climate and other multiple linked crises.

*They are calling on citizens to join in a decentralised **Global Day of Action on Saturday, November 12th**, during the COP, organised in cities and towns across the globe, and to help mobilise millions of people under a call for climate justice and bring movements together to build real power for systems change.*

They are also calling on civil society to organise People's Forums wherever they are throughout the duration of the COP to organise collective action and demand effective action by leaders and governments.

The COP27 Coalition demands a 'reset' of the multilateral system to address the scale of the challenge, as part of a wider agenda to address climate change.

To achieve climate justice, the groups are calling for efforts to:

- *Decolonise the economy and development.*

- *Faced with multiple crises, developing countries must reframe and implement alternative models of development that move away from Northern models of economic growth, which have proven to be a failure and are the cause of many of the crises, including the climate crisis, today.*
 - *Enable a just transition to 100% renewable energy through an equitable phase out of fossil fuels.*
 - *Prioritise public health, food sovereignty, agroecology and decent living conditions.*
 - *Restore nature and defend the rights of Mother Earth.*
-
- *Have rich countries repay climate debts – Rich countries have historical responsibilities for the climate crisis and must fulfil their obligations and fair shares by reducing their emissions to zero and providing poorer nations the scale of financial support needed to address the crisis.*
 - *Stop false solutions – Africa and other developing countries are fast becoming the dumping grounds for false solutions, many of which are driven by corporations who see the climate crisis as a way of profiteering, and which have devastating consequences for frontline communities and must be stopped.*
 - *Build global solidarity, peace and justice – We are facing an existential crisis as humanity. Social and climate injustices prevail, human rights are threatened, democracy is at risk and civil society space is rapidly shrinking. To achieve peace and justice, we will need to build massive global solidarity, especially with those most vulnerable and at risk from the impacts of these injustices.*

They say the UN climate talks are dominated by rich countries and corporations, and will need a major overhaul to address the scale of the climate crisis and injustices in the current system.

They recognise that the climate negotiations are an important focus for climate campaigners, but not the only way. And so they are calling on groups around the world to use the COP as a moment to build local solidarity and action and build power for real change.

Quotes:

Mohamed Adow, Director of the think tank Power Shift Africa, said:

“For far too long, Africa has been controlled by outside interests – a resource pool for extraction and export, and a dumping ground for the practices and technologies no longer wanted elsewhere. The COP27 Coalition is a space for Africans to take back control of our collective future. Civil society representing hundreds of organisations and millions of people across the continent are stepping up to show what an Africa that puts communities and well-being at the centre of its priorities could look like.”

COP27 needs to be a reset moment where rich countries need to face up to their failures to both cut their emissions fast enough and deliver on the climate finance they have promised. A new vision is needed where urgency and action replace voluntary targets and broken promises. If that shift takes place then COP27 will have put us on a trajectory to a clean, safe and prosperous planet.”

Tasneem Essop, Executive Director,

Climate Action Network International (CAN-I)

“For the Climate Action Network (CAN), a global network of civil society working to address the climate crisis, COP27 being held on African soil represents a critical opportunity to secure climate justice for peoples and communities vulnerable to and least responsible for the climate catastrophe.

Africans and peoples in the Global South are suffering from the devastating impacts of climate change, from flooding, heatwaves, drought resulting in food, water, and energy insecurity. Climate change impacts have a direct effect on how African countries can address their development needs.

We believe that deep transformational change, that is just, equitable and people-centred, is necessary to address these multiple and compounding crises facing people today, including rising poverty and inequality.

As CAN, we believe that these changes are only possible through the power and inclusion of the people. We are, therefore, joining hands with our sisters and brothers in the COP27 Coalition, representing movements from Africa, the Arab region, Egypt and globally to use our collective power to secure climate justice through the outcomes from COP27”.

Omar Elmawi, Coordinator, StopEACOP Coalition

“Africa needs to be a little selfish and think about itself. We have faced myriad levels of colonialism, our resources are exploited each waking day for the benefit of wealthier nations as the resulting impacts to lives and livelihoods are left behind.

The upcoming COP27 in Egypt is a time for Africa and African

interest to rise, a time for a community-led renewable energy revolution, a time for real climate reparations for the climate crisis affecting all Africans when we have done little to nothing to cause it. This is the time for the historical emitters to own up to their mistakes and deliver a COP that looks at avoiding emissions as an opportunity for real development, and not continuing to prioritise the interests of fossil fuel corporations who care only of their profits and shareholders, as we endanger humanity and the future for the coming generations.”

Lorraine Chiponda, Coordinator, Africa Coal Network

“In the face of an overwhelming climate crisis, Africa sits at a critical tipping point: if we continue business as usual as the pawn of external and elite interests, we risk being shackled by old fashioned thinking and outdated technology. We will become the last resort for the dirty energy systems of the past.

If, however, we embrace the leadership of African communities, and put their well-being at the centre of our priorities, we have an opportunity to fight the climate crisis by embracing our abundance of clean, cheap, renewable energy. We need leaders with a vision and boldness to reject the neo-colonialism of the fossil fuel industry. We need leaders to invest in communities to make the leap past the fossil fuels that are causing suffering to our people, and towards a future powered by clean, green power from the wind and sun. Africa is blessed with an abundance of this energy, but we need governments and business to help us harness it if we’re going to reach our true potential.”

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, President AFPAT

and Co-chair Indigenous Peoples Caucus

“Today Africa lives on the edge of climate wars. People are fighting for the few resources left. It can be a pond, access to a river or to a source of freshwater. Or for a piece of fertile land. In a region where 70% of people depend on nature for farming, when nature is sick, people are going insane. Farmers and pastoralists had an old alliance that is now broken in the competition for nature.

But for me, Africa is still a land of hope. We have so many climate warriors, fighting back at home. In my community, women already implemented solutions to the changing climate. They use their indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge to identify crops that can resist drought and heatwave and support a resilient agriculture. In the memory of our grandmothers and grandfathers, we find the map of ancient sources, those who still give water in the middle of the dry season. Indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge not only gives us so many words to describe the rain but also offers us the tools to fight back and combat climate change.

This COP27 must be an action COP for those who are the most impacted. Loss and damage, and climate adaptation should be guiding the discussion and the outcome should be as real for the people as direct access funding to adapt to and mitigate climate change. We, Indigenous Peoples, must be at the table and taking decisions as victims and also solutions to climate change. “

Charity Migwi, Africa Regional Campaigner, 350.org

“Developed nations have fallen short of their climate finance pledges to provide \$100 billion a year by 2020 to facilitate developing nations to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Beyond this shortfall, the much needed

finance to build resilience to the increasingly devastating impacts of climate change still remains lower than mitigation finance.

This is why it is time for Africa to curb the fossil fuel reliance of developing nations that has rapidly led to one of the greatest moral challenges of our time. Not only is there no room for more fossil fuels in Africa, where developed nations are now turning their gaze, but there is also no room for them anywhere. African nations must reject this exploitation and extractivism which will further fuel climate breakdown and expose African nations to catastrophic impacts.

As COP27 is being held in Africa, it's time to build a different future: one based on renewable energy; one that is truly just and accessible; and one that focuses on accelerating Africa's development by an economic systemic shift that leaves no one behind."

Ubrei-Joe Maimoni Mariere, Climate Justice & Energy Project Coordinator, Friends of the Earth Africa

As the world prepares for COP27, which will be hosted in Africa, we must use this opportunity to demand climate justice and solidarity for Africa and the global south.

To stop the climate crisis and bring about energy justice to the world, we need a rapid phase out of fossil fuels and a just and feminist and equitable transition to community-based renewable energy systems. We demand public climate finance in the form of grants (not loans), and technology transfer to help support the transition for our peoples. COP27 must be used as a space to empower people-centred renewable energy solutions. We demand that African leaders stop all new gas exploration and fossil fuels projects on our continent, which is already being burned and facing the ravages of the climate

crisis. We also demand an end to attacks on environmental human rights defenders and journalists, in Egypt, all across Africa and everywhere.

For more information:

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The return of the dinosaurs

As the planet burns, and Britain faces a massive cost of living crisis, writes [Alan Thornett on his ecosocialist discussion blog](#), Jurassic Park has taken over in Westminster, with the climate denier – and ‘hand-out’ hater – Liz Truss as Prime Minister.

Truss has been cynically foisted on the British electorate against their will. Only 6 per cent expect her to make a good Prime Minister, even most Tory voters are not convinced. She was the choice of neither Tory MPs nor Tory voters. Most of them preferred Sunak or for Johnson to stay in office.

Despite such fragile support, she never hesitated in gifting all the top jobs to the cronies who backed her. Only one MP who backed Sunak is a cabinet member today, which is Michael Ellis, the new attorney general. How long such a concoction will hold together when the proverbial hits the fan, of course, is another matter. (She is also trying to model herself on Margaret Thatcher, though whether she is up to that one only time will tell.)

You couldn't make it up. Jacob Rees-Mogg, the climate denier in chief – who wants to squeeze the last cubic inch of oil and

gas out of the North Sea, bring back fracking, and who has claimed that climate alarmism is responsible for high energy prices – is now Energy Secretary. His ravings are not only bizarre but completely unworkable, since anything that is extracted – at huge cost to the environment – would have zero impact on UK oil or gas prices which are set by the international market.

Lurch to the right

Truss's election is yet another lurch to the right by an increasingly xenophobic Tory party – driven by the fundamentalists of the European Research Group.

She is to the right of her (corrupt and despicable) predecessor Boris Johnson, as he was to Theresa May. She was elected in what is now a well-established and dangerous charade. Candidates in a Tory leadership contest, are required, in order to win, to convince the ever-more-extreme Tory members that they are racist enough, little Englander enough, and anti-migrant enough, for the job. Truss fully understood this process and played it to the full.

Nor is Truss any better than Rees-Mogg when it comes to the environment. In fact, her record is appalling.

As Theresa May's Environment Secretary, Truss was an arch deregulator of environmental standards. She cut subsidies for renewables and banned on-shore wind farms – which was (and remains) a huge blow to the UK's renewable energy capacity.

She is also responsible for the catastrophic pollution of our rivers and beaches with raw sewage by cutting millions of pounds earmarked for tackling water pollution. She cut the budget of the *Environment Agency* by £235m, including £24m that had been allocated for the surveillance of water companies in order to prevent the dumping of raw sewage in rivers and on beaches.

Her newly appointed chief economic adviser, Matthew Sinclair – the Gaudian columnist Zoe Williams tells us – “wrote a book entitled *Let Them Eat Carbon* in 2011, in which he argued that “the temperatures we face today may not be the ideal conditions for humanity to live and flourish”. Let warming go wild, in other words. It might be fun.”

Trickle-down economics

Her version of low-tax trickle down, free market, economics will further devastate the UK economy. She told Laura Kuenssberg last week that she was OK with the obvious fact that her cancelation of the proposed national insurance rise would be worth twice as much to the richest 5 per cent of the population as it is to the whole bottom half of taxpayers.

The scrapping of Sunak’s planned return of corporation tax to 25 per cent will cost an estimated £19 billion and will be a bonanza for big business. Her approach will be tested to destruction as the crisis develops further.

She insists, moreover, that the only factors that are driving the current crisis – which is more acute in Britain than any other European country – are the Covid pandemic and Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. Otherwise, she says, the British economy is “in good shape”.

This is arrant nonsense. There are two other crucial factors as well. The first is that economy has been wrecked by 20 years of Tory rule of which she was an active and uncritical participant. The second is that and it has been ravaged by Brexit – a factor which is being deliberately ignored (or obscured) by both the government and by Kier Starmer.

The idea that Johnson ‘got Brexit done’ is a sick joke. The whole economy has been destabilised by the ending of free movement of labour and by the developing trade war with the EU – which is the UK’s biggest trading partner many times over. Brexit permeates every aspect of British political and

commercial life from restricting trade relations to boosting racism and xenophobia.

Sectors such as agriculture, fishing, hospitality, retail, health care and meat processing, have been traumatised by it, whilst racism and xenophobia have been boosted. The problems created by Brexit in the North of Ireland remain entirely unresolved.

Truss's pledge to rip up the North of Ireland Protocol if she does not get her way on it threatens both an all-out trade war with the EU, plus retaliation from Biden in terms of a future trade agreement with the US.

It remains regrettable that most of the radical left in Britain voted for Brexit. The claim that they were voting for a different kind of Brexit that did not exist makes no sense. The only Brexits on offer were those proposed by various sections of the Tory party.

Truss's energy package

Having refused to discuss rocketing electricity bills during the election campaign – bills that were set to more than quadruple by January – she has now been forced to make a dramatic U-turn after no doubt contemplating the alternative, which was the likelihood that the current strike wave would be joined by rioting on the streets over energy prices and increasing social unrest. She also, no doubt, hopes that the package will give her political breathing space to launch the programme she really wants. We will see.

The resulting U-turn was her so-called the *Energy Price Guarantee*, which she refuses to put a figure on – though some estimates put it at 150 billion pounds. It will freeze household bills for two years, at £2,500 a year. Businesses and public sector organisations like hospitals and schools will get an equivalent deal for six months, after that, only 'vulnerable' businesses will be supported. There will also be

more licences issued to drill for oil and gas, and the ban on fracking will be lifted.

Whilst her package is better than nothing, given the scale of the problem, the average UK household will still be worse off, its energy bills will still be shockingly high, and the cost of living will continue to rise. Many businesses see the package as little better than a stay of execution. The *Joseph Rowntree Foundation* has calculated that it will leave low-income families with around £800 shortfall this winter, leaving them at risk of poverty or at the mercy of high-interest loans.

Her method of repayment says it all. She refuses even to contemplate a windfall tax on the eye-watering and unexpected super-profits that are being made by the oil and gas companies and insists instead on financing by government borrowing which means that it will be paid for by taxation. She has done this under conditions where three quarters of Tory voters say they would prefer a windfall tax to more government borrowing. The long-term consequences of such borrowing, however, might prove a very hard sell.

Starmer has challenged the method of payment, but he also ruled out the nationalisation of the oil companies, arguing, ludicrously, that to do so would be too expensive. His position is a huge liability as the possibility of a Labour government comes closer.

The big losers

The biggest loser in all this – along with the poorest in society as argued above – will be the planet and the future of life on it. The Truss premiership is a direct challenge to the zero carbon reduction targets that are crucial to the protection of life on Earth. And this, moreover, with COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh only two months away.

Her perspective was challenged on the *Today Program* on Tuesday

September 6th by none other than John Gummer (now Lord Deben), who was John Major's Environment Secretary from 1993-97, and is now the chair of the *Climate Change Committee* – an independent body formed under the *Climate Change Act of 2008* (i.e. under Gordon Brown) to advise the government on tackling and preparing for climate change. The *Committee* has long been critical of recent Tory administrations on the issue.

Gummer argued that whatever the government chooses to do or otherwise the harsh realities remain the same. Human activity has caused the global temperature to rise by 1°C since preindustrial times, and the disastrous consequences are clear to see. At the moment we are on course for an increase of 3°C and if we fail to reverse it the consequences we are seeing would at least treble.

The future, he argued, is with renewables – as is the way out of the current crisis. There are two crucial things, he insisted, that we have to do to defeat global warming and climate change – and we have to do them now. The first is to reduce carbon emissions to net zero, the other is to reduce the demand for electricity and gas via a major programme of energy conservation.

He is right, and the scope for both in the UK is enormous. Recent research by the *Institute for Government* found that the UK is particularly vulnerable to spikes in the price of gas since more than four-fifths of UK homes are still heated by gas boilers, which is much higher than most countries. The UK's housing stock is also the oldest and least energy efficient in Europe. More than 52% of homes in England were built before 1965 and nearly 20 per cent before 1919.

It found that the UK scored worse than other countries in Europe in terms of the energy efficiency of its homes. Citing analysis of a 2020 study, it found that a UK home with an indoor temperature of 20C and an outside temperature of 0C

lost on average 3C after five hours – up to three times as much as homes in other European countries such as Germany.

Renewables are getting cheaper whilst fossil fuels and nuclear energy are ever more expensive. Renewables are also being weaponised – in terms of both economic and military conflicts. Putin is currently holding Europe to ransom by withholding gas supplies. In Ukraine the biggest nuclear plant in Europe is being fought over in a terrifying game of (actual) Russian roulette.

Gummer warned governments that they ignore this reality at their peril. Whilst they can impede progress they can't turn the clock back. Public opinion, he argued has moved on in recent years and people today are far more aware of the consequence if we fail to tackle climate change.

We need a programme for rapid transition to renewables on a war-preparation scale. We don't want 'transitional fossil fuels, or any other kind of prevarication, we want renewables and we want them now. Governments can make major changes fast when they decide to do so, economies can be transformed within months.

This is the message that has to be taken to COP27 in November. We have to ensure that the gains of Glasgow are defended and that that new nationally determined pledges (NDPs) that are to be adopted at COP27 are radical enough to turn the corner on climate change and break the addiction to fossil fuel.

Alan Thornett, September 13 2022.

Solidarity with all protesting the imposition of an unelected King

by [Radical Independence Campaign](#)

The Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) expresses its solidarity with all those protesting the imposition of an unelected King. We condemn the fact that protesters have been charged with breach of the peace following the proclamation of Charles' rule in Edinburgh, and demand an end to militarised policing preventing our communities from having their say.

Last week, the final act of the UK's unelected head of state was to appoint a Prime Minister who has come to power with the votes of 0.12% of the population. A Head of Government chosen by a tiny number of Tory party members, and a Head of State anointed by an unaccountable 'Accession Council', to which our MPs and representatives are subordinate.

The death of Elizabeth II means the automatic appointment, with no discussion or reflection on our future, of a King manifestly unfit to represent the modern peoples of these islands. Charles is unelected, and unelectable. He would never have been chosen in a democratic system.

Never has it been more clear that the rotten structures of the British state are unfit for purpose in the 21st century.

We are told that "this is not the time" to discuss whether we wish to remain subjects of a monarchy. But the current wave of proclamations and propaganda promoting acceptance of the new

King leaves republicans throughout these islands no choice but to voice our dissent. RIC insists that now is the time, and that it is vital we demand the right to have a say about our democratic future.



The passing of Elizabeth II is obviously a historic and culturally significant moment. Many people, regardless of their feelings about the monarchy as an institution, feel a sense of loss at the death of someone who has been a constant presence in our public life. For some, it leads to reflection on our own bereavements. These feelings are valid, and must be respected.

But many others strongly feel that, despite their symbolic role, the Royal family do not represent them. There is a sense of widespread unease about having to immediately adapt to a new “King”, and the current state of officially enforced mourning creates an oppressive atmosphere to which we have not consented. For those with connections to countries colonised in the name of the Crown, it is impossible to mourn someone who acted as a symbol of one of the world’s most criminal imperial powers. This reaction is equally valid and worthy of respect. RIC rejects the idea that undue deference and sycophancy are measures of anyone’s respect or humanity.

The rush to be seen to conform to state mandated grief feels more appropriate for an authoritarian regime than a modern 21st century democratic country. The mass cancellation of

events, from sports to entertainment to crucial battles for workers' rights, causes massive disruption to the lives of millions. Ambiguity about correct protocol has seen football matches cancelled while rugby and cricket continued with minutes of silence. Citizens of Edinburgh face their city once again being shut down by road closures and armed police, in order to cater to a fantasy feudal image of the past.

Coming on the heels of years of pandemic conditions which prevented socialisation, cancelled events represent the crucial loss of a mental health lifeline for their participants. Organisers will have lost time and resources that cannot be replaced. But most importantly, thousands of people in temporary, insecure and low wage employment connected to events and hospitality will lose work, in the midst of an unprecedented cost of living crisis.

RIC demands Scottish and UK governments urgently collaborate to ensure these workers receive compensation for their loss of income.

RIC notes that MPs have been invited to make a new oath of allegiance to Charles. All elected parliamentarians, in both Westminster and Holyrood, are required to swear loyalty to the British Royal family, making this new vow a symbolic formality. Nevertheless, it is a democratic affront that our representatives do not swear to serve the people that elected them, and we call on all Scottish MPs to actively boycott this further demonstration of subservience.

The imposition of a new monarch simply crowns the completely anti-democratic nature of the British state in Scotland. Her elevation at the hands of Tory party members makes Liz Truss

the 9th Tory Prime Minister which Scotland has not voted for since 1955. She has variously promised to refuse Scotland's democratic right to self-determination through a second independence referendum, and to attempt to gerrymander the franchise. Her proposed restrictions on a future vote would have seen her fail to win the Tory leadership if imposed on her own contest. RIC demands the unelected UK Tory regime cease its attempts to prevent Scotland holding an independence referendum in 2023.

Contrary to what is often claimed, the monarchy play a key role in the continued anti-democratic nature of the British state. The monarch is consulted on legislation, leading to anomalies like the fact that the Royal household is exempt from laws against racial and gender discrimination in employment. It's widely expected that Charles will use his audiences with the UK government to push for his own personal hobbyhorse issues, in complete defiance of democratic scrutiny. The fact that new Tory Prime Minister, Liz Truss, is to accompany Charles on a tour of the UK demolishes the myth that the monarchy is apolitical.

But crucially, it is the Crown as an institution that allows British governments to act with impunity, declaring wars or states of emergency without oversight should they so wish. The Crown Powers are at the heart of the UK's unwritten constitution, and must be abolished if we are to live in a democratic society.

The death of Elizabeth II also marks a moment of deep reflection for formerly colonised countries and their descendants, from Jamaica to Australia. Their citizens must now decide to either amend their constitutions to recognise Charles, or move forward to a modern democratic republic. RIC expresses our solidarity with all societies shedding themselves of the legacy of British imperialism. We demand that in addition to relinquishing their role as head of state, the Royal family begin to make reparations for the enrichment

of their ancestors through the plunder of the British Empire.

RIC pledges to oppose all efforts to legitimise the rule of “King” Charles with vocal and public protest, in line with the long history of dissent represented by the common people and republican movements of these islands. We call on all those who support democracy to join us.

- *RIC is supporting a solidarity demonstration outside Edinburgh Sheriff Court on Friday 30th September, 9.45am. You can find more information [on Facebook](#).*

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FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 09:45 UTC+01

Defend the Right to Protest

Edinburgh Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court



[27 Chambers St, Edinburgh EH1 1LB](#)

Being a transgender woman at the International Youth Camp

by Sister from Scotland

In July this year, I attended my first ever International Youth Summer Camp. While I may have been a committed Leninist for a long time, and while I have been a member of the [Fourth International's Scottish section](#) for a few years now, unfortunately those years fell amid the COVID-19 pandemic and thus were deprived of camps. So by Summer of this year, I was especially excited to finally attend the camp as part of a delegation made up of comrades from Scotland (along with some dear international friends based in England!). It being my first ever time would have made this camp a special occasion all by itself, but there was another, much more personal reason why I was so excited to be taking part: This was going to be my first time living publicly as a woman.

You see, I am a transgender woman. But so far I have been a very cautious and closeted trans woman. I am really early on in my transition, and until recently the only people I have truly been myself around are fellow trans people from the queer movement. And even then, I've only presented as a woman in small gatherings of trusted friends and partners. But I decided that this time, at the camp, I was going to take a leap into the unknown: I was going to dress, present, live as the woman I really am, for the duration of the camp. I was going to introduce myself to my comrades.

It is a general point with me, that I do not take leaps into the unknown very often. I am one of those people who are very easily caught and stuck by indecision when it comes to big choices. I am a woman, but a fearful one. I want to show my face: I want to be known and thought of and spoken to and loved as a woman, but I am afraid. I am a woman, but most of

the time I am silent and hidden, buried deep in the closet. So what led me to take a leap, for once?

Two things. Firstly, I was impressed by the [Fourth International](#)'s approach to identity issues. Not just their historical involvement in the feminist movement, but also the ongoing commitment to racial justice, feminism and queer struggle that I could see upheld in the various sections of the international. Of course, historical and programmatic commitments, while inspiring and appealing to a closeted trans woman like me, would not alone have been enough to convince me to bare myself so truthfully and openly.

It was the second thing that was decisive. It might seem small to you, reader, but it was simply getting the chance, a few months before the camp, to meet some members of the Danish section who introduced themselves with they/them pronouns. Here they were, some gender dissidents just like me, clear and queer among their fellow comrades without a worry. It occurred sharply to me, right then and there, that if I was just a little bit braver, I could be like that!

Well, that decided it. With a good deal of panicked, excited sincerity, I told those comrades about myself, I mean really, truly about myself, and told them that I wanted to come out at the camp. They were supportive and cheerful, and looking forward to knowing the real me when we met again in France. And so, I had now committed myself. I won't lie: It was a decision I would worry and fret about as the camp drew near. This was natural, obviously. I was about to come out to about two hundred people, and across multiple language barriers too! Would I get tangled up in explaining myself? Would there be misunderstandings? Would some people turn out to be bigots? I had reason to be more than a little nervous: A depressing number of times in my years on the left, I have seen how easily some supposedly progressive "comrades" have dropped the act and morphed into reactionary dogs when challenged by actually-existing trans people with ideas and opinions.

However, I was also buoyed by a kind of feverish anticipation. The simple prospect of cutting the bullshit, dropping my boyish disguise and being totally honest seemed so radical, so wonderful, so liberating, that I could not wait to get to France. Besides, I knew full well that to be openly myself at the camp was a political commitment, not just a personal one. I am both a militant in a battle for my own civil rights and a socialist, and I feel it is my duty as a transgender socialist to do my best to bring together the causes of trans rights and socialism into one struggle. I firmly believe that the perspectives of trans people are valuable, and that the socialist movement is lessened by their absence, just as it is lessened by the absence of black perspectives or disabled perspectives. If the patriarchy tries to turn gender into a binary of bitterly opposed frontlines, then gender rebels like me are well positioned to show how these frontlines are vulnerable to permeation, sabotage and mutiny. We cannot be quiet, not when we have so much to give, so much to talk about, so much to teach. And so, I felt compelled to raise my voice: A woman's voice, loud, sharp and liberated.

As the fateful date approached I made some preparations, like telling the other members of the Scottish delegation, and coming out to a few comrades I had already met. Their support and acceptance was a welcome boost, and it really cemented my resolve and confidence to know that they would have my back during the camp. And when, after the long journey down to the campsite, the time finally came to commit to things and reveal my true self, it was good to be able to take the first steps with some help from comrades. I remember, on the first morning of the camp, speaking with my delegation, airing out some last-minute nerves and making absolutely sure that, in the event of any exclusion or bigotry, I could count on them to help me assert my right to be there as the woman I am.

Thankfully though, all that worrying was completely needless. I got so hung up on potential issues and fears, only for them

to dissolve the moment I walked out into the sun in a dress and began introducing myself. I don't think I was prepared for how natural it all felt, as if I had been doing this my entire life. Whether it was a comrade who had previously met me as a "boy", or whether it was someone entirely new, things went so smoothly that I was a little bit shocked. But only a little bit, because the dominant emotion I felt was joy – pure, riotous, joy.

This wonderful feeling would develop into a deep sense of fulfilment as the days passed. Yes, as one of a handful of trans women at the camp, I was in an extreme minority, but it hardly felt that way. On the contrary, the blanket response of my sisters was to welcome and include me, and as I spent time participating in the women's discussion spaces, learning, sharing ideas and helping to plan actions, I came to realise some things: chiefly, that this was the first time I properly felt a part of a women's movement.

I am a feminist. The problem is though, that the feminist movement in Scotland and the UK is in a parlous, disorganised state compared to the women's movement in the rest of the world. Feminism in these gloomy islands can't boast of mass, vibrant, militant women's strikes and demonstrations in the way that Argentinian or Portuguese or Polish or Chilean feminism can. In addition, the feminist movement here is so riven by culture war junk and middle class transphobia, that it feels pretty difficult for a trans woman like me to feel safe or welcome taking part in what little we have. There is that constant worry with the movement back home, a lingering fear that solidarity is something that can easily be revoked when the sister doesn't fit some arbitrary biological or social norm.

I had no such worries among the women at the camp. Here I experienced live, determined, militant sisterhood, a sisterhood ferocious in combat yet caring and inclusive towards its own, a sisterhood committed to mass revolutionary

struggle. And I was welcome implicitly, no questions asked! As I sat in meetings surrounded almost totally by cisgender women, I felt utterly at ease, a circumstance which honestly surprised me. I reflected that, were I in a similar setting in the UK, I would be a lot more nervous and on-edge, the familiar fear gnawing at me and making me wonder whether my inclusion might suddenly be subject to withdrawal on some bigot's whim. But here, among revolutionary socialist women, I was as much a woman as any other, a comrade to be loved and supported.

And this love and support helped me realise something else, too: The sheer difference which living in an honest manner makes to my ability to express emotions. I've long been aware of how enforced masculinity has marked and scarred me in various ways. Throughout childhood, I was conditioned, punished and harassed into acting and thinking like a boy by various forces, whether they be the ways patriarchal society moulds the minds of children to adopt certain gender roles, the way kids learn to laugh at girly "faggots" and "trannies", or the way an overly emotional child is relentlessly bullied for being "soft" and "effeminate", too much of a "crybaby". This prolonged campaign against the personality of the child induces a painful kind of alienation- Confused and afraid, bombarded by the world around you, the easiest response is just to give in and try and fit the role as well as you can, even if it means doing as the oppressor wants and shutting away parts of yourself. Sure, it might make you less of a target, and you might be convinced that it's better to try and be "normal" and "just like the other boys", but it never, ever, feels right. Even though you can't put your finger on what's wrong and why you feel so at odds with yourself, you simply cannot ignore the pain, no matter how much you scream at yourself to shut up and conform. It's hard to be at peace when you're mutilating yourself.

This is something that you gradually confront as you begin to

wake up and process the fact that you've been brainwashed, but you really do not realise the extent to which your identity has been dulled by living a lie until the burden of the lie is gone. It's something I've been approaching as I've shared my womanhood with loved and trusted friends, but the scale, duration and public nature of my doing so at the camp, and in front of so many cis people simultaneously, affected me in ways I hadn't prepared for. It shook me, but in the most wonderful way possible. Living so naturally and freely as a woman was like coming home to myself. Suddenly, I was so much less inhibited and so much more confident in expressing my feelings and emotions. Years of self-censorship and self-scrutiny have led me to mentally check myself in countless ways whenever I'm with other people, but here I didn't need to think about how I acted and expressed myself at all- Everything just flowed naturally.

So here I was, accessing those alienated parts of my personality that had been walled off and hidden by a childhood of having to be a boy. Here I was: A confident, affectionate, goofy, relaxed woman, perfectly at ease among her sisters and comfortable in her own skin. It felt so good to throw all the old defense mechanisms, all the nerves, all the congealed boy shit- in short, all my chains- right into the trash. How lightly you breathe when you aren't chained down!

This is what made the Youth Camp so special for me. I think it speaks to the way that the Camp functions as a space for a kind of pre-figurative politics, a way of testing out some elements of socialism via collective, co-operative living. The ability to express yourself exactly as you wish to at the Camp, there among your fellow militants, is a miniature of that limitless expression of the human personality that will be the right and freedom of everyone under socialism. I may be back in Scotland now, and I may be remaining quite closeted for the time being, but I nevertheless see the camp as marking an important milestone in my transition. It has inspired me,

and given me strength and determination. I have had a sample of full, liberated womanhood, and I want it every day of my life. Yes, the world will not always receive me as enthusiastically as my comrades have done, and yes, the struggle for freedom will be long and difficult, but I also know what's at stake and what's to be won, if only I, we, all of us women dare! And I know that it can only be so through collective, revolutionary sisterhood. We will go forward over the corpse of the patriarchy, arms linked and voices raised as one.

Our bodies, our choice!

Every woman a sister, every sister a revolutionary!

8 September 2022

Sister from Scotland is a [Fourth International](#) supporter.

Article also published by International Viewpoint & Anti Capitalist Resistance:

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7813>

<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/being-a-transgender-woman-at-the-international-youth-camp/>