

# **EVENT – ECUADOR: Behind the indigenous mass uprisings and ecosocialist struggles**

*ecosocialist.scot is holding an educational and discussion meeting in Glasgow and online on Wednesday 22 February 2023 7pm-9pm (19.00-21.00 GMT). The leaflet for the meeting is available in PDF form [here](#) and reproduced below. You don't need to book to attend the meeting in person, just turn up! But if you wish to join us online please use the [Eventbrite link below](#) to get the Zoom link. As this is an educational discussion you may find it useful to consult the [reading list on the link below](#).*

## **ECUADOR: Behind the indigenous mass uprisings and ecosocialist struggles**

Come and discuss with a feminist and ecosocialist activist from Ecuador (In-person Glasgow, online via Zoom)

**Wednesday 22 February 2023. 7pm-9pm  
(19.00-21.00 GMT)**

**icafe (upstairs meeting room), Ingram  
Street, Glasgow G1 1EX**

**(5 minutes walk from Glasgow Queen  
Street/Central stations [Google Maps  
Link](#))**



The Indigenous-led uprising in Ecuador in October 2019, and the similar national strike mobilisation in June 2022, have been two of the most dramatic, and successful, in a wave of big struggles and protest movements that swept the world in recent years – from Hong Kong, Iraq and

Lebanon, to Chile, Colombia and now Peru and Iran. Thousands of indigenous people went onto the streets of Ecuador to demand reforms in agricultural payment, to tackle the cost-of-living and poverty, to defend indigenous communities and to protect the natural environment from destruction, exploitation and profit-driven extractivism. The indigenous movement marched on the national capital, winning support from workers' organisations, from students and from the womens' movement.

They forced concessions from a neo-liberal government and vowed to continue the struggle.

In some parts of Latin America the semi-insurrections have gone alongside, and partly encouraged, the return of progressive governments in much of the region including recently in Colombia and even Brazil. But the struggles have often gone far beyond the limits of reform-minded governments and posed even bigger questions about the global order. In Ecuador, especially, they have shown something that is also vitally important now to activists in Scotland and other parts of Europe: how an immediate struggle to defend communities against rising prices and an attack on their basic living standards, can both develop a dynamic that is clearly anti-capitalist, and connect with the national and international environmental struggles to defend our planet, our Pachamama.

Maria Isabel Altamirano is a sociologist, community organiser and ecosocialist who has been active for a number of years in Ecuador in the feminist movement and working in Indigenous

communities in both the Highlands and the Amazon region. She was in the midst of the uprisings, both in 2019 and last June. She is now in Glasgow and will give a short introduction on what happened and its context, and then open up a discussion on what we can learn from the struggle.

This meeting will be held in Glasgow in person but also available can be joined online, with full participation and discussion including questions. (Please note the meeting will be in English but the speaker will speak in Spanish with translation – we are unable to provide simultaneous translation during the discussion).

Online: book through eventbrite link  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/545187278827>

If you wish to prepare with some reading, please consult our reading list at ecosocialist.scot (link)  
[https://www.ecosocialist.scot/?page\\_id=1699](https://www.ecosocialist.scot/?page_id=1699)

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# **Solidarity with the Peruvian people**

A statement by the Executive Bureau of the [Fourth International](#)

**Against the murderous government of Dina Boluarte!**

**New immediate elections and National**

# Constituent Assembly!

In mid-December, large and combative mobilizations took to the streets and squares of the main cities of Peru, in an uprising motivated by the coup perpetrated on 7 December by the right-wing majority Congress, which first dismissed and then had the elected President Pedro Castillo arrested – through the mechanism of the “decree of vacancy”, a sort of impeachment. The Congress replaced Castillo with his vice-president, Dina Boluarte. Popular mobilizations raised the slogans of new general elections, Constituent Assembly and Castillo’s release. Since then, the coup government of Boluarte, supported by all the bourgeois and reactionary sectors of the country, has strongly repressed those who oppose the institutional coup, with a bloody result of 30 dead and 700 wounded, including 300 police. [The numbers are from the Peruvian Ombudsman’s Office].

The Boluarte government, puppet of the illegitimate Congress, has played to stabilize itself by combining harsh repression with a strong media campaign of “pacification” of the country, through which it is criminalizing opponents, justifying arrests and confrontations. Thus, it has reinforced state repression: it has declared a state of emergency at national level since 15 December, resorting to the Armed Forces to contain the demonstrations. On that date, a military massacre took place in Ayacucho, with the use of bullet projectiles, and eight demonstrators were killed. Boluarte is resorting to the political police (Dircope) and the mass media to stigmatize and criminalize the popular fighters and organizes mobilizations for “peace” in some regions, with the social bases of the ultra-right in his crude objective of legitimizing the repressive forces. Thus, in these days, in order to confront a day of struggles and strikes called by the opposition for Wednesday, 4 January 4, the government called for a “demonstration for peace” in Lima.

# The crisis of the Fujimori political system

The coup and the popular reaction against Congress and the new president are the violent culmination of the political-institutional crisis deepened five years ago, a period during which four former presidents were convicted of corruption (one of whom went into exile, another committed suicide in house arrest) and three, elected by Congress, resigned between 2020 and 2021. The Peruvian tragedy has much of its origin in the current Constitution, promulgated by dictator Alberto Fujimori in 1993, which instituted corporate financing of parties and candidates – which guarantees an almost perpetual majority to the most conservative and pro-business forces – in addition to allowing the Executive to be constantly under the threat of impeachment by Congress.

Elected in an extremely polarized process and with ultra-fragmented political options (31 candidacies in the first round), the rural teacher and union leader Pedro Castillo – candidate of Peru Libre – came to power in June 2021. He governed harassed by a racist Lima elite, the populist ultra-right of Keiko Fujimori (the daughter of the dictator, who confronted him in the second round), a parliament and a coupist press, which have never digested having a trade unionist of peasant origin and from the interior as president. The mass media, the parliamentary ultra-right and the Attorney General's Office have permanently besieged him, with a systematic blocking of the Executive's bills, the opening of six fiscal trials in record time against the president and successive motions of vacancies and interpellations. At the same time, the right-wing and ultra-right-wing parliamentary groups prevented a possible Constitutional Referendum and altered the balance of power with constitutional reforms that limited the mechanisms that would allow closing the Congress so hated by the popular majorities. It was absolutely clear

that the reactionary majority in Congress sought to overthrow Castillo and regain total control of the Executive.

But, instead of relying on the popular organizations to fulfill the promises of change for which the people voted, Castillo was giving in to the ruling classes, removing progressive or leftist ministers, and incorporating neo-liberal technocrats in his cabinet. In less than a year and a half, he lost the political initiative and tried to decree a frustrated "state of exception", without any basis or the balance of forces for that. The response to this manoeuvre was the coup of the Congress, which was approved in nine minutes, without the right to defence and ignoring the procedures established in the same regulation of the parliamentary institution. In this way, Peru joins Honduras (2009), Paraguay and Brazil in a history of institutional coups (parliamentary, judicial and media) through which important fractions of the Latin American neoliberal bourgeoisies manage to get rid of governments that bother them or no longer serve them.

## **Illegitimate government and Congress**

Agent of the coup, the current Peruvian Congress has proven that it does not have the democratic legitimacy to continue its administration, besides never having had constituent power. After the vacancy irregularly approved against Castillo on 7 December and the brutal repression of popular demonstrations by the illegitimate government, the removal of Boluarte from office, with a call for new elections for president and a new Congress, is urgently needed.

The profound popular erosion of the Peruvian political system born of Fujimorism requires – as wisely and courageously demanded by those who are rising up against the Congress and the coup President – a new democratic and sovereign constituent process, which will rewrite the rules of the game

in favor of the majorities.

The Fourth International expresses its solidarity with the popular mobilizations in Peru and our active support for their demands, beginning with an immediate end to the repression of the protests, the release of all prisoners and a thorough investigation, with international observers, into the deaths, injuries and imprisonment perpetrated by the Armed Forces and police. We call on all revolutionary and progressive organizations of the world to denounce the coup that has overthrown Castillo, the authoritarian government of Dina Boluarte and the Congress coup, in view of the brutal repression they are deploying in the Andean country.

**AGAINST THE PARLIAMENTARY COUP: OUT WITH DINA BOLUARTE!**

**END THE STATE OF EMERGENCY NOW!**

**RELEASE OF ALL PRISONERS! INVESTIGATION OF THE DEATHS AND PUNISHMENT OF THE ASSASSINS!**

**FOR A CONSTITUENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY!**

Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

4 January 2023

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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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## **Ecuador: Indigenous leader released after mass protests**

Leonidas Iza is free but a national strike continues in Ecuador, writes María Isabel Altamirano Solarte for [ecosocialist.scot](http://ecosocialist.scot).

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **International Solidarity**

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

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

generation of policies to curb the wave of violence and hired killings; public policies to curb gender violence and femicide.

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

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

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



Protests were taking place

across Ecuador (Pic  
@CONAIE\_Ecuador)



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