

# **“The slogan ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ seeks to bring people together for equality and freedom”**

Tuesday 1 November 2022, by [MOUSTAKI Diego](#), [Sarah](#) (Date first published: 26 October 2022).

**In support of the uprising in Iran, a coordination of left-wing and feminist groups has been formed in France, bringing together several collectives such as the feminist queer and anti-capitalist collective in which Sarah, interviewed by Diego Moustaki for *l'Anticapitaliste*, participates.**

## **Can you introduce yourself and tell us about the collective you are part of?**

I am Iranian. I arrived in France five years ago and I am part of the feminist, queer and anti-capitalist collective that was spontaneously formed at the time of the revolt in Iran a little over a month ago. On 19 September, three days after the death of Mahsa Amini, we gathered in front of the Iranian embassy in Paris to show our solidarity and to make the voices of our sisters and brothers heard in the streets of Tehran and also in Kurdistan.

## **So it's a very spontaneous collective. Can you tell us how you learned of Mahsa Amini's death? What was your collective reaction, your individual reaction?**

The morality police had been behaving very, very violently for a long time, especially towards women but also towards all people in the public space. They were always controlling the way people dressed. There were already many events broadcast on video where women were violently arrested and ordered to dress according to the dress code. This time, not only was there violence, but the death was clear, and Mahsa Amini's family opposed the official version of the authorities. The majority of the population does not support the police of the Islamic Republic who control dress and private life. The population has been subjected to this for decades, and the anger built up over 43 years has exploded.

It was the women first of all who expressed their anger and their demands for freedom of movement over their bodies. Beyond the symbolism of the veil in the Islamic Republic and the uprising, the movement is spreading to the point where we talk about a revolution...

This regime is a set of repressive behaviours, it is a tyranny towards women, gender minorities, ethnic minorities. We talk about minorities not only because of the numbers but because they are minoritised. They don't have a place and are always subject to repression justified by religion.

The resistance that is taking place here, which was very spontaneous at the beginning, is beginning to be organised.

On 19 September, we took part in a rally in front of the Iranian embassy in Paris, then a few days later at the Place des Innocents towards Châtelet, and in a feminist action called by an international feminist group called "Feminists for Jina". This was a performance-type action. Then, on Sunday 9

October, the demonstration on Place des Fêtes brought together at least 2,000 people. What is important is that this demonstration was called by a coordination of left-wing and feminist groups. Because, on the same day, at the same time, at the Trocadero, a demonstration was held for Iran with very ambiguous slogans and this was recuperated by the royalists and the right-wing parties who declare themselves to be opposed to the Islamic Republic today.



**In the resistance that is taking place today in France, but also in Britain and Germany, what weight and responsibility do you have to maintain a left-wing and anti-capitalist resistance?**

For us, the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" has something very progressive about it. The people who are currently fighting in the streets of Tehran are giving their lives for this. We also hear the slogan: "No to tyranny, no king or [spiritual or religious] leader". This is another voice from Iran that has nothing to do with what the parties that want to take it over are saying.

The latter present themselves as the legitimate alternative to the Islamic Republic in the event of the victory of the current revolution, whereas they have ideas that are opposed to the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom", which is a progressive slogan, which seeks to bring people together in favour of (wage) equality and freedom. In addition, in previous uprisings, there were trade union movements of workers, teachers and public transport drivers: a succession of struggles in different sectors in Iran. Today, it is a feminist cause that is starting, but all these movements are linked.

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How can this royalist party declare itself the alternative to the Islamic Republic, which has a history of repression against workers and under whose regime there was total inequality among the Iranian population? The royalists were against the revolution, especially in 1979. For them, the idea of revolution is a left-wing idea that leads to anarchy and destabilizes the country, helping separatism. So there is a need to mobilize and show ourselves against this kind of party.

It is frightening! 1979 must not happen again. At the time, there were several left-wing parties that fought to overthrow the monarchy and then it was the Islamists who regained power and repressed the parties that had overthrown the monarchy. We do not want yet another monarchy.

We who know the history of the Iranian uprisings, the political history - from the constitutional revolution [editor's note: in 1905] to the 1979 revolution - as well as the history of the struggle of women in Iran, which is more than 170 years old, feel responsible and committed to defending our values so that there is no going back after a revolution.

### **What are the perspectives for the mobilization in France? How can we establish links with Iran?**

Concretely, we are still in the phase of filtering the internet. Iranians have become experts in VPN. We try to keep links with our comrades and our families. We try to give them tools; they make videos, observations in their cities and in their neighbourhoods. There are many networks that come together to complement this work of information from Iran. We try to be connected to this independent network rather than to the big media.

### **How can you be reached here in France?**

We are a small and recent team with limited resources. If there are isolated people looking for a collective to defend their values, they can reach us via a Facebook group called "Coordination des groupes de gauche et féministes". We also have an Instagram group: "leftistfeministcoord". They can contact us via these pages or follow us. For future actions, we thought it would be useful to identify ourselves more clearly and state what our principles and values are and make them available to people. To raise some money for our mobilisations, we are planning to organise an event in a lecture hall and to set up a fund, because for the moment our funding comes from our personal funds. We are planning a new demonstration because it is here that we can have the freest political speech, and it is also a support for the struggle in Iran.

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**Diego Moustaki**

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**P.S.**

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