

**Bedroom Tax:** unity between and within communities is key, as campaigners step up the fight to axe the hated tax  
• see pages 7&8

**NO BEDROOM TAX NO EVICTIONS**  
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# Scottish Socialist Voice

# LET'S BURY THE THATCHERITE LEGACY

- **Axe the Bedroom Tax**
- **Scrap the anti-trade union laws**
- **Dump Trident WMDs**
- **Vote Yes to break with austerity & war**



**MAGGIE'S GONE:** unfortunately, Thatcherism's far from defeated

by Colin Fox

IT will surely become one of those questions people ask periodically – 'where were you when you heard Thatcher was dead?'

I was in a traffic jam adjacent

to the Antarctic sailing ship RRS Discovery in Dundee. After switching on the one o'clock news, I felt compelled to leap out of the car and with both arms raised high in the air loudly exclaim, 'Ya dancer!'

To my great delight, the horns of other motorists blared and their headlamps flashed all around me in a clear expression of solidarity. The Scottish Socialist Party conference last weekend ended on an equally upbeat

note. After our communal rendition of The Internationale an impromptu cry of "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie!" went up and a spontaneous rousing chorus came in reply 'Dead, Dead, Dead!'

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**BEDROOM TAX PROTEST MARCH 18 MAY - 11.30AM**  
**/FAMILY FUN DAY GEO. SQ GLASGOW**



MASSES AGAINST DESTRUCTION: the Glasgow demo was impressive but Faslane needs more campers now PHOTO: Simon Whittle

# UNITED AGAINST NUKES

## Thousands of Scots take to streets against WMDs

by Sandra Webster

**CONSENSUS** and evidence of some left unity were present in Glasgow earlier in April. Thousands marched in Saturday in George Square in the largest demonstration against nuclear weapons Scotland has seen for decades.

This was backed up by a mass blockade on Monday which hundreds attended. This saw 47 people arrested and the base shut down for two hours. All of this was organised by a steering group of groups of the left including the SSP and peace campaigners like groups from Trident Ploughshares and Faslane Peace Camp.

### Contrast

The Sunday training was a contrast from the more traditional left organising methods of a demonstration and march. People were challenged to consider what non-violent direct action meant. This meant a move away from even shouting at the police or authority figures no

matter if it makes you feel better. The training was full of those who have been opposing nuclear weapons for almost all of their adult lives including women from Greenham Common. They inspired many younger people present to take a stance on the blockade that followed the next day.

Despite the constant fear of the organisers about the lack of people who might attend the blockade a few hundred people were present making this action the most biggest seen at the base for several years.

Police had been brought in from many areas to deal with the protesters. There were demonstrations at both the north and south gates. The first arrests were made at the North Gate with demonstrators being removed in waves at both areas over the rest of the morning.

The demonstrators sat peacefully in the road some were carried into the police vans while others walked in when asked. The mood was a gentle one with campaigners standing their

ground against the police using words as ammunition.

As well as the veteran campaigners for whom arrests are a protest against the evils of weapons of mass destruction several younger people were arrested for the first time.

These included young students from Paisley and a 13-year-old girl. Due to the large number of arrests some people were taken to Stewart Street in Glasgow rather than more local prisons.

### Harsh penalty

A friend who was arrested for the first time was locked up alone for 13 hours and was offered chicken casserole instead of a vegetarian meal and one drink of tea. Despite this being her first offence, she was bailed to appear later next month. A harsh penalty for a first arrest.

The success of the weekend has left Peace Protesters with some optimism for the success of future actions. Lessons have been learned from peace campaigners and left activists about

how working together can achieve such positive results.

What's next? A cloud on the horizon is the possible closure of Faslane Peace Camp after 31 years. Peace activists are keen in the road to the referendum that the message of protest that the Peace Camp symbolises is taken to the door of the policy makers right at the heart of Scottish and UK politics.

Whether this can be achieved while still maintaining a permanent Peace Camp is still uncertain. Peace activists are debating among themselves and attempting to find solutions. This is our debate too though, and one we should be active in being involved in.

A Faslane Peace Camp support group has been set up and has called for those interested in living at the camp to visit and stay on 3-5 May. Present and former Peace Campers will be there to advise what living in the camp might involve.

• See [faslanepacecamp.wordpress.com/](http://faslanepacecamp.wordpress.com/)



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Although it is considered good manners 'not to speak ill of the dead' this convention was largely ignored in working class communities across Britain.

'Good riddance, to bad rubbish' was the prevailing view of people here. And rightly so, not least because the right wing press had spent the week attempting to re-write history and claim, for instance, that Margaret Thatcher was brought down, not by 15 million non-payers of the Poll Tax, but by Tory party divisions on Europe.

They also insisted she saved Britain from economic ruin and gave working class people "freedom" to buy their council houses and "freedom" to buy shares in privatised public utilities. It was inevitable then that in death, as in life, Thatcher would evoke profound class divisions.

### Impoverishment

There were never going to be any tears shed for her in the former mining communities, steel towns or manufacturing centres she destroyed. Here, her legacy was burned into universal consciousness by the bitter experience of mass unemployment, the most vicious anti-union laws in Europe, the redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich, the race riots, the obscene rewards for City spivs in contrast to the impoverishment of millions of men and women she forced into early graves.

And her reputation internationally was no less vile. This was the woman who denounced Nelson Mandela - one of the most inspiring figures of the 20th century - as a 'terrorist' for daring to fight back against the vicious, racist Apartheid regime in South Africa.

It was Thatcher who invited General Pinochet, the Chilean dictator who overthrew the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende and murdered thousands of socialists, trade unionists and leftists,

# LET'S BURY THE THATCHERITE LEGACY



**ARM IN ARM:** Labour have lapped up Thatcherism since the '80s

to escape justice and live in luxury in London. She also used the UK's veto on the UN Security Council to repeatedly prevent the 'international community' acting against Israel its for violations of Palestinian human rights.

But ironically, all things considered, Thatcher's most indelible legacy has been New Labour.

Few can doubt how she remapped the party political landscape of Britain as first Neil Kinnock, then John Smith and Tony Blair all paid her the biggest possible complement by adopting her economic and social philosophy.

And yet it is ironic that Thatcher's trenchant contempt for Scotland led to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. Just as her flagship policy was defeated, not by limp and ineffective Labour opponents, but by 15 million 'refuseniks', she was defied in Scotland too by further mass action. The 'democratic deficit' that continues to see majority opposition to the Tories in Scotland neutralised by Westminster became so pronounced under Thatcher it later forced Tony Blair into devolving some limited powers to a new parliament at Holyrood.

There is however one conclu-

sion all can agree on - Thatcher may be dead but Thatcherism lives on. For the Tories are today as right wing as Thatcher ever was. Their Bedroom Tax proposal for example bears all her hallmarks and has been introduced in Scotland against the overwhelming wishes of the population in the same way the Poll Tax was.

And if Labour became a pale imitation of the Tories in the 1990s, they are certainly no less right wing now under "Red" Ed Miliband. Even the SNP have adopted her neo-liberal economic model.

### Defiance

All four parties capitalist parties in Scotland continue to pay homage to her today in their own way.

It is left then to the Scottish Socialist Party, as many at our conference last weekend pointed out, to continue the defiance of Thatcherism and its neo-liberal 'Praetorian guard' of rampant uncontrolled finance capital.

Like the National Union of Mineworkers and the Anti-Poll Tax Federation before us, we steadfastly refuse to bend the knee and allow their class to destroy our communities and our values. We resolve once again to build an independent, socialist Scotland. That would certainly have Thatcher spinning in her grave for eternity.

# What is the media's role in the indy referendum debate?



OFF KILTER: non-Scottish ownership means bad news for fairness

by Campbell Martin

**THE** SNP's landslide victory at the 2011 Scottish Parliament Election was remarkable, particularly when we consider that the whole electoral process was set-up to prevent such an outcome and no part of the mainstream media in Scotland supports independence.

Of course, people were not voting for independence in May 2011, which meant that some newspapers - most notably the *Sunday Herald* - were prepared to back the SNP to manage devolution within the UK.

*The Sun* also backed Alex Salmond for First Minister, but that decision probably had as much to do with the paper's ratings war with the Labour-supporting *Daily Record* than any consideration of what was best for Scotland.

Media endorsement can be important. Readers fed a daily diet of stories telling them Scots are incapable of governing their own country, and that independence would be 'a disaster', are more likely

to have reservations than if newspapers and broadcasters simply set-out the facts.

The illogical position of the so-called 'Scottish' Labour Party - backing a British Union that allows Tories in London to govern Scotland, even after Scots have rejected them at the ballot box - goes unchallenged by 'Scottish' newspapers whose editorial line is set by their company's head-office, which is usually also in London.

Seventeen-months from the referendum, the *Sunday Herald* has declared it is open to persuasion on independence. Like the majority of Scots, the newspaper's editorial team is prepared to listen to the arguments and make up its mind based on the facts.

That is how responsible media should behave: but, sadly, most mainstream newspapers sold in Scotland will continue to print misrepresentations, down-right lies and propaganda in furtherance of the British Unionist cause supported by their non-Scottish owners.

Against that background, how

are Scots going to receive the positive message about taking control of our own country through becoming a normal, independent nation and building a better, fairer Scotland?

The reality is that most 'traditional' newspapers are dying. Sales are plummeting and profit-driven bosses are slashing jobs in newsrooms up and down the country, resulting in poorer-quality papers and a further slide down the spiral to corporate oblivion.

More and more people - of all age groups - are primarily getting their news from the internet, with pro-independence websites daily producing content that informs the constitutional debate, allowing readers access to the positive case for independence that the mainstream 'dead-tree' media tries to block.

Sites, such as NewsNet Scotland and Wings Over Scotland perform the public service of allowing the positive case for independence to be articulated, while also exposing the lies and smears of British Unionist political

parties and media. There are other such sites and pro-independence blogs where informed content on our country's constitutional future can be accessed.

We no longer have to rely on the hard-copy media of the last century, particularly newspapers that attack the right of Scots to govern their own country, and which portray the working class as work-shy skivers.

Social media will also play a growing part in determining how people vote in next year's referendum, as more and more of us regularly exchange views online.

Gone are the days when politicians could hide from one election to the next.

They now want us to know their every thought, but if we don't agree with them, we can immediately tell them.

The internet and the media platforms it offers can be a game-changer in the independence referendum. The British Unionists no longer control what we read.

• See [newsnetscotland.com](http://newsnetscotland.com) and [wingsoverscotland.com](http://wingsoverscotland.com)

# INDEPENDENCE FROM THE TORIES

by *Richie Venton*

**WITH** 630,000 members, the Scottish trade union movement makes up a huge slice of the population, both when it comes to fighting attacks on our lives and conditions right now, and in shaping Scotland's future.

So it's encouraging that the recent STUC conference in Perth agreed a whole raft of progressive policies which, if implemented, would offer stiff resistance to the plunder of our communities by Westminster, and help shape a fairer, less unequal and more secure future for the next generation.

But this also raises the issue of where the unions stand on the Referendum - an issue which the same conference smothered in fudge.

## Savagery

One of the central battles facing workers and their communities is the mind-boggling savagery of cuts to jobs, services, benefits, pay, pensions - the things people rely on to survive - by a class of politicians who might as well live on Mars, they are so removed from the lives of ordinary people.

The Cuts Coalition's weapons of choice are fear, and divide-and-conquer tactics.

And the biggest advantage Cameron and Clegg have in waging class war is the feeble Labour opposition - and many union leaders, themselves prisoners of their blind Labour loyalty.

So it was a tremendous boost that the Scottish Trades Union



**CUTS RAMPAGE: the feeble Labour opposition boosts the Tories**

Congress overwhelmingly voted for "coordinated industrial action, including a Scotland-wide one day strike" against the government's austerity measures.

Now they need to act on this, a demand already widely raised in workplaces and union branches in the public sector. But this needs to be fought for in the private sector too, as our jobs, pay and workplace rights are sacrificed to fund the £107,000 a year 'pay' rise issued to all 13,000 UK millionaires through top-rate tax cuts.

Workers need a lead, a focus for their fury, and a boost to their confidence in fighting back, by the STUC and each union leadership rallying people for a combined day of general strike action, linking all the workplace issues with the fight to scrap the Bedroom Tax - and the overall demand to evict the Tories. This needs doing at May Day rallies

and at every possible workplace. This month sees an escalation in the class war by the Twin Tories of Westminster: the theft of £500million a year through their Bedroom Tax; cuts to unions' facilities in representing members at work; a doubling to two years in the job before workers get full legal protection; charges of up to nearly £2,000 for taking a case to Employment Tribunals.

And they are being egged on to plunge the knife even deeper.

Tory London Mayor Boris Johnson is demanding harsher laws to outlaw strikes while Labour-linked 'intellectuals' in the Fabian Society demand vastly increased taxes on pensioners.

The combined power of workers in both public and private sector jobs, linked to the growing fury of communities against the Bedroom Tax and young people rejecting the greed and corruption

of the entire system, needs to be harnessed in a showdown with the Tories and the employers.

A one-day national general strike would be a powerful start in a battle to topple the Tories.

The STUC conference called for numerous progressive measures that would enhance the lives of millions at work and home. And they endorsed an overall economic goal of "common ownership, investment in public services and full employment".

But when it came to the issue of where the STUC stands on the Scottish Referendum just 17 months hence, they baulked at linking their laudable social and economic goals to a clear analysis of how best to get them.

## Welcome stance

The fact the STUC has point blank refused to be part of the Tory-Labour-LibDem 'Better Together' campaign against Scottish self-government is a welcome stance of absolutely historic proportions. In past decades the big Labour-affiliated unions like UNITE, UNISON, GMB and USDAW could have been guaranteed to join the ranks of the unashamed Unionists, mostly on the basis of the Labour Party's involvement, but also couched in the language of 'workers' unity across the UK'.

Not now because the experience of the past 30 years has proven Westminster governments of all political stripes to be married to big business and ruthlessly anti-working class, and therefore anathema to many rank and file



trade unionists. Workers' loyalty to Labour is crumbling.

For instance, UNITE did a survey of its own Scottish members in 2011 to find over 40 per cent of them had voted SNP. It's no accident that UNITE's Scottish regional secretary Pat Rafferty warned last week's Scottish Labour party conference "workers won't be bounced into voting No just because the Labour leadership is opposed."

## Universalism

So the STUC has rightly distanced itself from 'Better Together', and rightly demanded answers of both camps on what they offer workers in terms of workplace rights, greater equality, social justice. As UNITE's Pat Rafferty put it, "The decision should be based on how independence would affect issues like public services, the tax system and welfare benefits - we want to know who will support our fight for our welfare system and the principle of universalism."

Panic stricken Scottish Labour leaders meeting in Inverness



**WORKERS NEED INDEPENDENCE: years of Tory and Labour Thatcherite Westminster governments have only brought growing poverty, inequality, insecurity, privatisation and war** PHOTO: Simon Whittle

made an attempt to distance themselves from their Tory allies by promising 'a distinct Labour campaign for devolution', which the STUC leadership has welcomed, with talk of "opportunities to develop thinking of further devolution of powers in the event of a No vote."

But mindful of the opinions of

their ranks, the STUC leadership hastily added, "the STUC will engage in this discussion, just as we are prepared to consider the shape of an independent Scotland if Yes is the outcome".

The STUC's emphasis on 'a just Scotland', and their criticism that "both sides remain particularly quiet on the central role which fair employment, decent pay and collective bargaining can play in achieving better economic justice", are both justified.

## Realistic prospects

But instead of acting like neutral observers, the STUC and individual unions should be making their own analysis of not only the kind of Scotland they want, but the most realistic prospects of achieving that under either independence or devolution.

Surely the 30 years of 'Thatcherism' under successive Labour as well as Tory governments - are proof enough that continued centralised capitalist rule from Westminster means growing poverty, inequality, insecurity, privatisation and war for the working class?

A post-No vote Scottish government being granted a few extra powers by Westminster is an extremely debatable scenario, given that Westminster would be em-

boldened by the failure of the Scottish people to seize the chance of self-rule, and given that Ed Miliband is against even granting Scotland control over income tax.

Even if it was, it would still be incapable of meeting the core aims of the trade union movement, such as repeal of the anti-union laws; progressive taxation of the rich and big business; a Living Wage for all; universal benefits; reversal of privatisation; reversal of cuts; public ownership of transport, energy and services; public ownership of the banks; scrapping of Trident; refusal to join the USA in imperialist None of those are possible under devolution -even a 'distinctively Labour' devolution

And when figures on the 'left' of Scottish Labour try to claim staying in the UK would help redistribute wealth, which particular planet have they occupied for the past 30 years?

Anas Sarwar declared "Redistribution is one of the strongest arguments in favour of the UK. From the richest parts to the poorest." One of the strangest arguments more like!

Britain, including under Labour, has suffered massive redistribution of wealth and power from the poorest regions to the

**The Executive Committee of the Scottish Socialist Party extends May Day greetings to all our friends and comrades, both in Scotland and internationally.**

**Scrap Trident, say no to NATO and remove WMDs from the Clyde.**

**Struggle, solidarity and socialism.**

# Evict the Tories - not tenants!

City of London, from the millions to the millionaires.

When left-wing Labour MSP Neil Findlay speaks at the Better Together STUC fringe meeting, in favour of ‘a federal Britain’, and decries socialists who fight for independence by claiming we ‘lack political representation within the YES campaign, which is dominated by the pro-market SNP”, he misses several points.

Instead of p the myth of a ‘redistributive’ Britain he should face facts from the past 30 years.

He should face up to the growth of UKIP - currently at 19 per cent in polls - and the real and present danger of a Tory/UKIP Coalition in Westminster.

He should recognise that Labour in power has absolutely no intention of reversing the Tory cuts, nor of repealing the Thatcher anti-union laws, nor of extending public ownership.

## Tory-free

He should accept that a vote for independence is NOT a vote for indefinite rule by ‘the pro-market SNP’ but actually a huge opportunity to have a Tory-free Scotland, and for working class people to have the chance of electing a government of the left capable and willing to carry out the aims reiterated at the STUC.

These people should join and assist campaigns like Trade Unionists for Independence (TUPI) which recognises independence is not only the most democratic, but the only realistic option in fighting for workers’ rights and redistribution of wealth and power.

Whilst rightly encouraging debate around the idea of ‘a just Scotland’, the STUC needs to climb off the fence, assess the balance of political forces in Scotland and the UK, and use its resources and membership to defeat the pro-market forces in the independence movement, and win a future that transforms the lives of Scottish workers, acting as a beacon to workers in other countries.

by *Richie Venton*

“I MOVED from a two bedroom house to a three, because as well as my 3-year-old I have three stepsons who live with us a few days a week.

“The council said I qualified for that size of house, but now months later I am being hammered by the Bedroom Tax, because my husband doesn’t get any of the child benefits for his sons.

“On top of that my husband is ill. He had a heart attack at work, was declared fit after three months, went back to work and had another attack.

“We need an extra bedroom for me to sleep because he suffers COPD and it’s impossible to sleep in the same room. But they make no allowance for that, and expect us to pay £50 a month Bedroom Tax, wherever the hell we are meant to find that kind of money.”

## Litany of crimes

So said one Ayrshire woman at the latest in our series of SSP public meetings. And that’s but one example of a litany of crimes against decent people by the millionaire gangsters who devised and imposed the Bedroom Tax.

Alex has just joined the SSP after getting active against being robbed of £10 a week from his £71 benefits, and being told he doesn’t really need a bedroom for his 10-year-old daughter and 3-



year-old son when they stay with him a few times a week. But he has uncovered an even more cruel case through his campaigning efforts: a woman whose grandchild died aged three months, whose ashes are buried beside a memorial apple tree in her little garden. Now she is being bullied into moving home, leaving these precious remains behind, because of the Tory Tax.

The savagery of this theft of £500 million a year from the poorest sections of

society - nearly 8 out of 10 of them having a disabled family member in the house - is beyond words.

Now the Tax has bitten, the time for action has arrived. A multitude of local public meetings have drawn huge crowds in the past two months or so, forming networks to defy and defeat the Bedroom Tax.

## Umbrella campaign

The SSP has been at the heart of this, as have UNITE Community branches, and in particular the umbrella campaign No2BedroomTax.

People getting letters of decision on benefit cuts from the Council Housing Benefit departments should make sure they get advice from these networks on how to appeal, within the one-month deadline.

Numerous legal challenges



ON THE MARCH: this tax makes people angry PHOTO: Simon Whittle



have been lodged in the Courts, and if any of these win, tenants who have appealed on similar grounds could stand to gain - provided they put their appeals in writing, on time.

The grounds for appeal can range from the needs of a disabled person under Human Rights laws, to parental duties towards their children under Children's Acts, to challenging the use of the room defined by the landlord as a bedroom. Model letters are available through the campaign.

Mass appeals also help to clog up the system, one strand to making this vicious tax unworkable.

But collective action is also critical. The Scottish Socialist Party has led several lobbies of councils and local housing associations demanding a policy of No Evictions.

## Important impact

This has had a very important impact. The pledge by SNP councils - and the Edinburgh Labour/SNP/Green coalition - to have no evictions this year arising from the Bedroom Tax are the result of campaigning.

We need to pound Labour and other councils to follow suit - and likewise local housing associations. Already this has resulted in some of them promising 'no evictions'.

But the SSP thinks the councils need to go at least two steps further.

Firstly, alongside declaring there'll be no evictions for this tax, they should mount a campaign demanding the shortfall in rent off the Scottish Government.

Otherwise, they will be hounding tenants for rent money they simply do not have, with the potential threat of taking pre-eviction action against them followed by



**AXE THE TAX: thousands protested in March. May 18 will see more on the streets** PHOTO: Simon Whittle

eviction orders, if the council authorities deem that they 'have not taken all reasonable steps to avoid rent arrears'.

And an even more powerful weapon in the hands and within the powers of local councils is to follow the Knowsley route: re-designate their housing stock, redefining the purpose of rooms so as to avoid them being liable for the Tax as 'spare bedrooms'.

Campaigners need to pile on the pressure for councils and housing associations to take these steps - in tandem with the demand that the Scottish government fund social landlords for the guesstimated loss of £53million this year due to tenants being financially incapable of paying the Bedroom Tax.

Of course some, including SNP leaders, protest that this would deprive other hard-pressed services of funds at a time of austerity. True, but that merely highlights the need to pound the Scottish government with demands to defy the broader cuts package dictated by Westminster, mobilizing

communities and workforces in a mass movement demanding back the stolen billions off Westminster.

Not only would that tie in with the recent STUC decision to support a one-day general strike against the Tory cuts; it would also strengthen the case for outright independence, for a Scottish government to abolish the Bedroom Tax.

## May 18 protest

Unity is our strength. Unity within and between communities. Unity between those directly hit by the Tax and those opposed to it on principle. Unity between tenants left on starvation incomes and workers in councils and housing associations who are already facing pay cuts - in at least one case, pay cuts of up to £5,000 a year - redundancies and reduced services.

An immediate opportunity for such a display of unity will be May Day marches, and especially the Bedroom Tax day of protest organised by the No2BedroomTax campaign, in Glasgow on Saturday 18 May.

We need to make that a mass mobilisation. The movement that has erupted against the most vicious attacks on the working class since the Thatcher Dark Ages is also an expression of deeper resentment at a that rips off the majority for the profits and obscene privileges of the millionaire minority.

And people are awakening to the fact there is absolutely no excuse for benefit cuts.

We live in a wealthy nation, but one where the richest individuals and capitalist companies systematically dodge £120billion in taxes every year - 240 times as much as the Tories are robbing off people through the Bedroom Tax.

Instead of evicting tenants we need to evict the Tories; tax the rich instead of the poorest, and boost the incomes of the majority as well as create jobs by building decent, affordable social sector housing for all needs.

We need a socialist alternative to a rotten system that spawns the likes of the Bedroom Tax - which the SSP is determined to fight for.



# Songs of Chile's struggle

by Carolina Perez

**LAST** Thursday, Quilapayun played the first of only two UK dates on their 40th anniversary tour.

Promoting their new album, they began in true Chilean spirit by appearing more than an hour late.

The evening kicked off with support act Valentina y Voces Del Sur. The Chilean-Scottish combo let the small crowd know the tone of the evening with their opening number *Comandante Che Guevara*.

The singer took the audience on a mini musical tour of Latin America with soothing Cuban ballads and Venezuelan poetry set to more upbeat cumbia rhythms.

## Haunting

A four-piece band used traditional Latino instruments and Valentina has a beautiful voice with the same of haunting quality of Chile's new song heroine Violeta Parra.

And so to the main act. The five members of Quilapayun came on to a warm reception and after an instrumental number, the band showcased their latest album as well as dipping into their back



**QUILAPAYUN:** played their only, rare, UK dates in Glasgow and Edinburgh in mid-April

catalogue. Highlights were *La Muralla*, *Vamos Mujer* and a beautiful rendition of *Santa Maria de Iquique*. The song is a commemoration of a massacre of striking workers in the northern Chilean mining town. Demanding higher pay and better working conditions, 12,000 striking miners camped out at the Santa Maria school and plaza in Iquique.

## 2000 murdered

Resisting orders from the military to return to work, troops opened fire and more than 2000 men, women and children were murdered. With enthusiastic applause, this song felt right on the day after Thatcher's funeral.

There were happy songs too. *El Pimenton*, a lesser known Victor Jara song, and *Chilando*, a humorous little number about the strange contradictions of living in exile and maintaining a Chilean identity - a song that many of the fellow exiles amongst the audience could

relate to. Wrapping up the set was a tribute to Allende and a rousing encore of *El Pueblo Unido* which led to much chanting and fists in the air.

Chatting to some women afterwards, they said they felt

sad at the last song because in their memory of Chile, the people were defeated.

But one woman also said there is hope because the younger generation still believe victory is possible.



**The East Kilbride branch of the Scottish Socialist Party sends May Day greetings to all workers in struggle across the globe.**

*"The great only appear great because we are on our knees. Let us rise."*

**For international Solidarity and Socialism**

**The Wee Red Bookshop**  
**Books, T-shirts, ideas to change the world! All at very reasonable prices. 137 London Road, Glasgow.**  
**Phone for opening info, or if you can donate books, we can arrange for them to be picked up.**  
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# In the shadow of tyranny

Exhibition of photographs by **Edith Tudor-Hart**, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Queen Street, Edinburgh (free entry)

by Alan Gay

**EDITH** Tudor-Hart was born into the fag-end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at a time of serious social unrest. Vienna was plagued by poverty brought about by mass unemployment. This gave impetus to the Social Democratic movement known as 'Red Vienna'.

**Exile**

Edith Tudor-Hart became a dedicated communist and spy for the Soviet Union. She used photography to make her beliefs a statement on the situation of ordinary folk. She was arrested for subverting the State and only escaped a lengthy gaol sentence though



**TUDOR-HART:** used photography to make her beliefs a statement on the situation of ordinary folk

marriage to an Englishman (Tudor-Hart). The consequence of this resulted in permanent exile to Great Britain.

Her photographs speak for themselves, as the everyday lives of people at work rest

and recreation in the 1950s and '60s - miners in Tyneside, dole queues, undernourished children in London, naked children wearing protective goggles, being soaked in ultra violet light to cure rickets. Architecture includes the monolithic 'Karl Marx Hoff' apartments for workers. What would the great man think?

The photographs are immaculate (perhaps too much so) and may seem a little posed and lacking in spontaneity to an eye used to modern media. Despite this they do signify the times and seem to impel the viewer toward a wider World view.

**Authenticity**

The exhibition is reinforced by an eight minute, continuously running black and white 16mm silent film showing Viennese workers at the May Day demonstration in 1927.

It shows a sea of people flooding down streets into the main square.

Grainy images of speakers exhorting the crowds lend authenticity. So, if you only

have eight minutes to spare, the exhibition is worth a visit just for this... to observe overwhelming people power as the crowds wash to and fro.

Around the corner in the Scottish Gallery (16 Dundas Street) is an exhibition of the painting of the late Joan Eardley (also free entry).

Much of her work was in Glasgow where she fed her art with first hand observations of deprived children.

They are drawn in pastels and oil in a semi-impressionist style that produce a stunning evocation of life in the tenement slums of the 1950s and '60s.

For a snip of up to £120,000 you can have one of those children hung on your wall, with eyes boring in to you. Eyes that reflect the crushing deprivation of those years.

The exhibition closes on 27 April but her work is recorded in most contemporary art literature and is frequently displayed.

'Catterline in Winter' is on permanent display in the reception area of the Dean Art Centre.

**MAY DAY GREETINGS  
FROM TAY COAST  
SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY**

**FOR INDEPENDENCE  
AND SOCIALISM**



# VENEZUELA AT THE CROSSROADS

by Bill Bonnar

IT was an election marred by blatant vote rigging and corruption with the opposition crying foul. It was an election which lacked legitimacy in the eyes of much of the international community and among its Latin American neighbours. Not Venezuela but in nearby Paraguay which last week 'elected' the billionaire Horacio Cartes of the far right Colorado Party to the presidency. Cartes, who previously served a jail sentence for corruption and drug dealing, was almost immediately endorsed by the United States as the legitimate winner in the election.

The contrast with Venezuela could not be more stark. The right wing opposition has cried foul on the election alleging widespread vote rigging; despite being able to offer little evidence in support of this allegation. They then orchestrated a campaign of violence in which seven supporters of the Socialist Party were murdered, mostly in drive by shootings, in a clear attempt to destabilise the government.

## Transparency

The United States is still considering whether to recognise the legitimacy of President Nicolas Maduro's victory; this in an electoral system widely praised for its transparency and legitimacy.



NICOLAS MADURO: the right will aim to destabilise his government

Not that the government will lose much sleep over whether they receive the endorsement from a foreign government who have supported every vicious fascist dictatorship in Latin American in their successive reigns of terror against the people's of that region.

However the closeness of the result will cause concern in government circles. Maduro received 50.8 per cent of the vote as against right wing candidate Henrique Capriles 49 per cent. This in a turnout significantly lower than the recent previous election. The turnout may well be the key to un-

derstanding this result. It was widely assumed by all sides that Maduro would win the election comfortably.

This seems to have affected the Socialist Party vote with some not voting because they thought victory was in the bag. It is also likely that the 'cult of the personality' which existed around former president Hugo Chavez might have impacted negatively on Maduro who until recently was largely unknown in the country.

Despite Washington's concerns for the future of democracy in Venezuela the result has been en-

dorsed by most government in Latin America and will stand. When one adds that the Socialist Party recently won a landslide victory in regional elections the legitimacy of the revolution is secure.

The opposition are coalition of right wing forces many of whom are violently contemptuous of democracy and would welcome a return to military dictatorship. Where they have succeeded is in articulating many of the problems of ordinary people for which the government is blamed.

This includes high inflation, a crumbling infrastructure and high levels of crime. Yet they are a fractious opposition and the key for the government might be in attempt to bring some of the more legitimate elements into the government process.

## Real concerns

Whatever happens it is clear that the Venezuelan revolution is at a crossroads. It needs to find a way to move forward while tackling some of the real concerns of ordinary people and to broaden its support among those who voted against its presidential candidate.

The Right will no doubt continue their campaign of destabilisation with the aim of provoking the government into a crack-down. How it handles the opposition may be the key to the future of the revolution.

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## Can a common programme provide a progressive vision for Yes campaigners?



**RADICALS UNITED: greens and socialists need to build a coherent policy programme for radical independence**

PHOTO: Simon Whittle

by Ken Ferguson

**THE** Scottish Socialist Party has agreed to seek discussions with other progressive parties and campaigns on the pro-independence left to explore the possibility of reaching an agreed set of policies for a post-Yes Scotland.

Agreed by the party's conference in Edinburgh the approach aims to explore the areas of agreement on a wide range of policies such as housing, jobs and the environment reflecting the left of centre consensus in Scottish society.

It is the recognition that this consensus needs to be more clearly part of the broad campaign for a Yes vote that underpins the SSP's initiative in order to provide a broad policy programme reflecting the reality of what the progressive left would want to achieve in an independent Scotland. This would help break with the current sterile

diet of scare stories and assertions which do little to provide a vision of what the reality of a radically different Scotland could look like.

The approach also recognises that no one party, group or campaign has a monopoly on the answers to the range of problems and challenges that would face a post independence government. Agreeing a policy framework can allow discussions it without asking participants to break with their current campaign or party.

### Promising

Certainly the field for the progressive pro-independence left is increasingly promising as was seen again recently with the decision of Co-op party chair Mary Lockhart - announced in Scotland on Sunday as labour met in Inverness - to vote Yes next year. A Labour stalwart and supporter of the left wing Campaign for Socialism pressure group which presents

- sometimes with some intellectual arrogance - the case for voting No and seeking an increasingly illusory British Road to Socialism, her decision is a blow for Labour but will be particularly stinging for the small forces of the CFS.

Ms Lockhart's decision is the latest in a series which has seen former prominent Labour figures underline their support for independence including Dennis Canavan who now chairs the Yes campaign, former Dundee MP and MSP John McAllion and Dundee University rector Brian Cox, and reflects a gathering trend in the Labour movement.

Plenty of evidence for this could be found in the coffee bars at the recent STUC's congress in Perth. Indeed one seasoned STUC watcher I spoke to said that union leaders are "between a rock and a hard place" with their own desire to remain loyal to Labour increasingly questioned by a rank and file considering a Yes vote.

The reality for the pro-unionist socialists around groups such as the Red Paper Collective is that they are handcuffed to the Better Together cross class alliance and that all three parties in that grouping Labour and the welfare slashing Lib Dems and Tories back austerity and war.

### Serious alternative

Few trade unionists for example seriously believe that UK Labour would restore trade union rights under a Miliband government just as they didn't under Blair and Brown and for Scots a Yes vote looks like an increasingly serious alternative.

If those who back independence from a radical perspective are able to translate their desire for change into a coherent Red/Green policy programme putting concrete proposals into the debate not only would the boost the campaign for a Yes vote but start to map out the shape of a new progressive independent Scotland.