

Scottish Socialist



Party

PEOPLE
not
PROFIT

A stylized illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a black top with a yellow and red patterned shawl. She has her right arm raised with a clenched fist, and her mouth is open as if shouting or chanting.

Scottish Parliament Election Manifesto 2007

About the Scottish Socialist Party

“Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation”

Alasdair Gray

We are the Scottish Socialists and we fight in hope. We cut against the grain of the political consensus, refusing to accept that ‘in the real world’, millions must live in poverty for a few to live in unimaginable wealth, that weapons of mass destruction must be moored in the Clyde to keep us safe from weapons of mass destruction, that wars mean peace, and that a diminishing democracy delivers us greater security.

We believe we can make a better nation, where every state school child eats a nutritious, free lunch every day of the working week; where pensioners receive a decent income with access to well-funded, free public services; where families are housed in warm, secure homes near green spaces and schools and shops; where refugees are welcomed and given the right to work and make a new life here, to the benefit of us all; where war is an ugly memory; where energy is sustainable and nationalised; where we protect instead of destroy our environment; and where expanded, fare-free and publicly-owned train, bus and ferry services link every community in Scotland, from the heart of Glasgow to the shores of the Outer Hebrides.

But we meet you in a dark time.

As the British government declares terrorism the greatest threat to ‘our way

of life’, across the world people are already dying as a result of climate change caused by that same way of life. We have only a very short time left to stop the Earth from burning because of the destructive waste of capitalism.

Since the last Scottish Parliamentary election in 2003, a brutal war has been raging in Iraq, courtesy of the British and American governments.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians have lost their lives, and their society has been pounded to dust.



FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE: for a world without poverty, war and environmental destruction, for a world of peace, equality and justice

PHOTO:
Craig Maclean

BACK PAGE
PHOTO:
Eddie Truman

part one

END OF THE EMPIRE: by pulling Scotland out of the union, we can drag ourselves out of Britain's illegal wars and end the tyranny of Trident on our shores

PHOTO: Simon Whittle



The SSP opposed this war long before it started. So too did the majority of Scots.

Yet the lives of our troops, and billions of our tax money, continue to be squandered on this ugly misadventure, this last gasp of a dying, discredited empire.

It's long since time we pulled out of Iraq and handed sovereignty to its people.

In Scotland, we have no say over this. Such is the illusion of devolution.

An independent Scotland would have full control over its foreign policy and where and how it deploys its soldiers.

There is now a consistent trend towards pro-independence parties. Scotland is calling time on the 300-year old Union – and for a myriad of reasons, none of them to do with anti-English sentiment.

We are calling time on a Union that drags us into illegal, immoral wars, from Flanders fields to the white heat of Helmand.

On a Union that ignores the call for nuclear disarmament and instead dumps its world-shattering arsenal within miles of our biggest city.

On a Union that opens up a democrat-

ic deficit of such proportions that, no matter who we vote for, we always get the choice of Middle England.

On a Union that offers tax breaks to corporations and the rich, while screwing the poor and forcing them into low-wage, short-term, soulless, meaningless jobs.

We have nearly full employment, yet are plumbing new depths of poverty and all that it entails, even amongst working families, from premature birth to premature death, through barely habitable housing, cheap, over-processed, nutrition-free food, pollution, crime, isolation and physical and mental illness.

On a Union so obsessed with fixing it for its corporate friends that we have badly and inappropriately constructed schools and hospitals, built for double or triple the cost through PFI, to keep us in hoc for decades to come; infants suffering from middle-aged diseases that will kill them, through the government's refusal to regulate the processed food industry; generations sliding into unimaginable, unpayable debt through unregulated credit and finance companies; cities, towns and villages gutted by out-of-town retail developments and the unstoppable invasion of the big four supermarket cartel; and a countryside bulldozed over by developers and agribusiness, at the cost of our rural ways of life, our indigenous food culture and a solid husbandry of the land.

This is no way to live, and wrenching ourselves free of this dysfunctional relationship will do us, and England, the world of good.

The bogus 'British' identity that Labour politicians are currently struggling to articulate is nothing more than a jingoistic relic of the past. In re-establishing our identity, as Scots, as socialists, as members of an international community that stretches from pole to pole, we enable the English, the Welsh and Irish to do so too.

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We seek an independent, Scottish socialist republic that functions, not as an island, but as a part of a living, breathing network of humanity.

A network that will recognise that we are part of nature, rather than masters of nature, and that will build a global society that lives within the limits of the Earth's ecosystem.

We seek to reach out to others in struggle, from the Palestinians in Gaza to the trade unionists in Colombia, the political prisoners of Burma to the benighted indigenous peoples of Australia.

We fight in hope, and we work hard.

In 2003, we returned six MSPs to Holyrood; the biggest parliamentary breakthrough of any left wing socialist party in the UK in a generation.

We use that parliamentary representation to highlight grassroots campaigns - for free school meals, the scrapping of prescription charges, opposition to the illegal invasion of Iraq. To highlight the plight of low-income households, of children growing up in a world of consumerism and dense traffic and commodified education, of asylum seekers locked up in former prisons, of all who are left out in the cold by the market system that puts a price on everything, yet values nothing.

We fight in hope, for people everywhere.

Our MSPs take only the workers' wage, donating the rest to the party; we have no career politicians in our ranks.

Our focus is always at street-level, our aim being to build a mass movement to promote and develop the ideas of socialism.

To put the idea of real equality, real social justice, back on the agenda.

To make this a better world for the upcoming generations and ensure that the Earth is still in a fit state to support them.

Join us in the only war worth fighting - against poverty and greed, and for humanity and peace. People, not profit.

Our six flagship policies

The SSP believes in telling the truth to the people. We do not pretend that we will form the next government of Scotland. But we can make a difference.

In Scotland's multi-coloured political system, no single party can command an outright majority. If opinion polls are accurate, the Lib-Lab coalition could be defeated in May 2007 and a new government formed. Small parties such as the SSP could then punch well above their weight politically.

The SSP has no intention of selling our principles for a few ministerial seats. We will work with other parties on an issue-by-issue basis, supporting progressive legislation and opposing regressive legislation.

The SSP has its own priorities. In the run-up to May 2007, we will strive to build mass public support for six key policies which we believe would transform Scotland.

After May 2007 we will seek to build cross-party support inside the parliament for these six policies.

1) AN INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM WITHIN ONE YEAR.

The SSP is striving to create an independent, nuclear-free, multi-cultural, Scottish socialist republic.

That is a long term goal. In the short term, we can take a mighty leap forward towards that goal by breaking free of the suffocating stranglehold of the British state.

The SSP has never hidden its socialist

politics. We are a working class party that stands up for ordinary people against big business and the rich. Our flag is deepest red.

But we work with other parties on the immediate objective of independence. The SSP was the first party in Scotland to sign up to the cross-party Independence Convention, which now draws together the SSP, the SNP, the Greens and a range of individuals.

We also back the non-party Independence First campaign, launched in 2005 to fight for an independence referendum.

In 300 years the people of Scotland have never been given the chance to decide our own future.

Should we remain dependent on pocket money from London? Should we continue to be dragged into the inferno of war by a government which we cannot deselect?

Should we continue to tolerate in our midst a nuclear arsenal capable of wiping out a million years of evolution?

Should we continue to accept dawn raids and forced deportation of our children?

Or should we move forward into the 21st century as an independent nation state that can engage directly with the wider world beyond the English Channel and the North Sea?

For the SSP, the answer is clear.

Scottish Socialist Party



But we are democrats. It is not for politicians to decide Scotland's future. It is the people who must decide.

We are 100 per cent confident that when the arguments are presented for and against independence, the people of Scotland will decide to break with the past and march confidently forward into the future.

Whatever the balance of forces after May 2007, the SSP will seek to build cross-party support for a referendum bill within one year.

2) A SCOTLAND-WIDE FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK.

It's an idea whose time has come. Our roads are congested. Our towns and cities are polluted. Scientists are ringing the alarm bells over global warming.

Dramatic and radical action is needed to move hundreds of thousands from private cars to public transport.

Scotland could lead the world in the fight against climate chaos by becoming the first country in the world to create a nationwide free public transport system.

Does it sound too ambitious? Possibly.

But in the 1930s and 1940s, the idea of a free National Health Service sounded like pie in the sky.

Yet it was turned into a reality by a Labour government within three years of being elected in 1945. And that was after six years of destruction on a mammoth scale during the Second World War.

The Scottish Transport Minister admits that a free public transport system would cost just £500 million.

It's a lot of money. But it's less than one sixth of Scotland's share of UK military spending.

It's half the amount that the Scottish Tories plan to hand out in tax cuts by

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slashing basic rate income tax by 3 pence; and one third less than the cost of the LibDems' proposed 2 pence tax cut.

And it's less than half the amount the SNP plan to hand out to big business in Corporation Tax cuts.

Instead of tax handouts which mainly benefit the wealthy, the SSP will fight for the Scottish Parliament to phase in the biggest pro-environment and pro-social inclusion measure enacted in Scotland for generations – a free public transport system.

Free public transport has been a resounding success in the Belgian city of Hasselt, where it was introduced in the late 1990s. Car use has plummeted and bus passenger numbers have risen by 1000 per cent.

Compare that with the Scottish Executive's target of a paltry one per cent rise

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in bus journeys and two per cent in rail journeys.

Right now, traffic congestion, road accidents and road repairs cost Scottish businesses and taxpayers over £4billion a year, according to the Scottish Executive and the CBI.

That figure could be reduced by at least £1billion by making Scotland's trains, buses, ferries and underground fare-free.

For £1billion a year, we could abolish fares, bring Scotland's buses and railways back into public ownership, massively expand services, and make them fully accessible to all disabled travellers.

And by cancelling monstrously expensive white elephants such as the £500million M74 extension, the Edinburgh Airport rail link, and other prestige projects, we could have up to £4billion for capital spending to bring our public transport system up to world class standards.

The SSP has already brought forward a bill proposal before Holyrood to re-regulate Scotland's buses, which would be Phase 1 in the creation of free public transport system. Phase 2 will involve the establishment of a publicly owned bus group sub-divided into ten regional companies.

Phase 3 will see the removal of all bus, underground, and passenger ferry fares (foot and cycle), accompanied by an expansion of services to meet increased demand.

Phase 4 will transfer the Scotrail franchise, when it expires in 2011, to a new publicly owned Scottish National Rail company – and remove fares for all rail journeys within Scotland.

Funding:

Within an independent Scotland, the funding of a free transport initiative would be straightforward.

There would be a range of options available, including oil revenues (the SSP supports extra taxation on oil profits

and, ultimately, public ownership of the oil industry).

Hundreds of millions could also be generated through higher corporate taxation and/or a rise in the top rate of income tax.

And, by reducing per capita Scottish defence spending to around the level of the Republic of Ireland, an additional £2.5 billion could be available for public services and wealth redistribution.

Even within the constraints imposed by devolution, there are various ways of funding a free public transport system.

Because a new public transport system would mainly come under the control of local authorities (and groups of local authorities), any funding for public transport would be designated a supplementary local tax, and therefore would fall within the powers devolved to Holyrood.

Possible funding options under devolution include:

- A 'transport payroll tax' on all businesses with more than 10 employees. Such a tax is used widely in France to fund public transport. The Paris Metro, rail and bus system, for example, is largely funded through a payroll tax of 2.2 per cent, which generates well over two billion euros a year. The tax is set as a percentage of the total wage bill and is paid by the employer. To raise around £800 million, Scotland would need to set the tax at around 2.5 per cent, applicable to all companies in the private sector with ten employees or more. This transport payroll tax could be offset against Corporation Tax, which is paid to the UK exchequer, effectively transferring up to 30 per cent of the costs to Westminster (ie 200-240 million).

- Free public transport could also be funded by a progressive income-based local tax, such as the SSP's proposed Scottish Service Tax, with bands adjusted accordingly to raise the extra money.

- Revenue could also be raised by imposing a special tax on HGV lorries towards the costs of road repairs and maintenance. The average juggernaut inflicts 50,000 times the road damage caused by a car. This HGV mileage tax would be based on annual mileage as registered on tacographs and would offset the roads budget, allowing tens of millions to be raised towards the funding of free public transport.

Even if all of these options were to be ruled out, the Scottish parliament could use its tax-varying powers and its control over business rates to raise additional finance. A one per cent increase in income tax would generate at least £300 million a year. By imposing a supplementary local transport tax of three pence for those earning over £30,000 a year, an additional £300 million would be raised. A further £300 million could be raised by increasing the uniform business rate.

3) 100,000 NEW HOMES FOR RENT

Scotland is in the grip of a housing bonanza, according to the property dealers, with house prices soaring through the stratosphere at supersonic speeds.

Certainly, many homeowners are now in the bizarre position where the annual rise in the value of their home is outstripping their annual salary.

That might seem like good news for Scotland's home owners – though bitter experience suggests that housing markets can go up like a rocket one year, and

The SSP wants to redress this imbalance between private and public by building 25,000 fully accessible new homes for social rent every year.

Scotland today is 100 times richer than the pre-war years. It is a myth that we can't afford high-quality social housing.

down like a stick the next. But for the million and a half Scots who do not own their own home, the housing boom is a cruel mirage.

With every rise in house prices, the more securely they become locked out of the housing market.

Scotland is now sitting on a ticking housing time-bomb. The number of first-time buyers is dwindling rapidly – down from 50 per cent to 20 per cent of the market over the past ten years. Rather than a genuine growth in home ownership, we have a sellers' market, a financial merry-go-round with the main beneficiaries being the mortgage lenders.

To make matters worse the social rented sector is at the point of collapse.

Decades of government cuts in housing support to local authorities, combined with the disastrous right-to-buy policy, has condemned hundreds of thousands of families to a life sentence served out in dilapidated, crime ridden housing schemes.

Last year 11,200 council houses were



sold off – but there was not a single new council house built in Scotland.

There are now approximately 25,000 homes built every year. Of these, 90 per cent are private, leaving just 2500 new houses for rent, built mainly by housing associations.

There is now a desperate shortage of housing for rent. This shortage especially affects larger families, because of the lack of four and five apartment houses for rent; and young people who are excluded from the housing market and cannot afford the exorbitant costs of private rented accommodation.

The SSP wants to redress this imbalance between private and public by building 25,000 fully accessible new homes for social rent every year.

This could be financed by:

- Cancelling the housing debt for all Scotland's local authorities – not just those who have signed up for stock transfer, generating £2billion over four years.
- Forcing private developers to allocate one house for social rent for every three new houses they build - at rent levels set by the local council or housing association.
- Allowing councils to impose a 'millionaires tax' on all land and property valued at over a million pounds. Even a modest land tax of less than one per cent could generate hundreds of millions for new rented housing.

Even amidst the poverty and depression of the pre-war years, cities like Glasgow managed to build elegant tree-lined council estates such as Mosspark and Knightswood.

Scotland today is 100 times richer. It is a myth that we can't afford high-quality social housing.

In contrast to the mainstream parties, the SSP believes that high quality, low-rent social housing holds the key to averting a future housing calamity in Scotland.

4) NUTRITIOUS FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR SCOTLAND'S SCHOOL CHILDREN

Eight years after the setting up of the Scottish Parliament, our nation still tops the international league tables for heart disease and premature death.

And still, according to a new report by Save The Children, nearly half of all families are living in poverty.

Writing in the Sunday Herald (January 21 2007), columnist Tom Shields offered “a wee suggestion (as opposed to an initiative, a strategy or an action plan) to address the problems of poverty and low uptake of school meals. Let’s give all our pupils free school dinners. Hearty soups, pasta, salads, fruit, even burgers (made on the premises).”

For six years, the SSP has spearheaded the fight for nutritious free school meals as part of a serious onslaught against obesity, junk food culture and child poverty.

The campaign is backed by a multitude of children’s charities, medical professionals, education experts, nutritionists, trade unionists and churches.

Even Scottish Labour MPs are arguing strongly in favour of free school meals – but not in Scotland, unfortunately. When the new Liberal Democrat council in Hull voted to overturn the council’s free school meals policy, five Scottish Labour MPs signed a motion applauding “Hull City Council’s three-year pilot scheme, combining increased investment in healthier school food ingredients with the abolition of charges for primary school meals.”

If it’s right to have free school meals in Hull, it’s right to have free school meals in Scotland.

Unfortunately the four main parties in Holyrood all oppose the SSP’s free school meals bill. For the time being, the free school meals bill introduced by Scottish Socialist MSP, Frances Curran, has been blocked.

For six years, the SSP has spearheaded the fight for nutritious free school meals as part of a serious onslaught against obesity, junk food culture and child poverty.

But this is one campaign that will not fizzle out. After May 2007, the Scottish Socialist Party MSPs will push forward this measure, which will have a dramatic effect on the 100,000 children in Scotland who live in poverty, but are ineligible for free school meals.

It will also remove the stigma of free school meals from hundreds of thousands more children who do qualify under the degrading means test to assess eligibility.

And by setting minimal nutritional standards and removing the need for parents to fork out dinner money, it would improve the health of hundreds of thousands more who spend their lunch money on junk food and even cigarettes.

The cost of free school meals is negligible when set against the overall budget of the Scottish Parliament.

Frances Curran’s Free School Meals bill would cost just £74million – one third of the Scottish Parliament under-spend last year.

5) THE REPLACEMENT OF THE COUNCIL TAX WITH A PROGRESSIVE INCOME TAX

Back in the early 1970s, a Scottish theatre company was launched with the unusual title of 7:84 Scotland.

The founder of the theatre group, the socialist writer John McGrath, had chosen the title after reading an article in the Economist magazine which explained that 7 per cent of the population owned 84 per cent of the wealth.



That was thirty years ago. Since then, the gap between rich and poor in Scotland has widened into a vast chasm.

Imagine a small child standing gazing up towards the peak of Scotland's highest mountain, Ben Nevis.

That height gap between the child and the mountain roughly corresponds to the wealth gap between the richest and poorest people in Scotland today.

A report this year by Save The Children showed that one in five families live below the poverty line, rising as high as 62 per cent in some parts of Glasgow.

At the other end of the social scale, Fred Goodwin of the Royal Bank of Scotland was last year paid £2.85million in salary and bonuses.

The differential between the salary of Fred Goodwin and the salary of a full time worker on the national minimum wage? Approximately 250 to one.

And the differential between the highest and lowest Council Tax band? A maximum of just three to one.

The Scottish Socialist Party wants to replace the Council Tax with a new sys-

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tem of taxation that truly reflects income differentials within Scotland.

Our alternative is the Scottish Service Tax. It is an unashamedly redistributive tax, the details of which were developed by economists at Paisley University.

It would be based on annual personal income, thus shifting the burden of local taxation from low income to high income households. All earnings under £11,000 would be automatically exempt. Earnings over £11,000 would be taxed progressively.

Under the Scottish Service Tax, instead of eight Council Tax bands based on property values, there would be six bands based on income. The breakdown of these bands is shown below:

Band 1) Gross income under £11,000. Every individual who has a gross annual income below £11,000 will be automatically exempted from the Scottish Service Tax.

Band 2) Gross income between £11,000 and £30,000 would be taxed at 4.5 per cent.

Band 3) Gross income between £30,000 and £50,000 would be taxed at 15 per cent.

Band 5) Gross income between £50,000 and £60,000 would be taxed at 18 per cent.

Band 6) Gross income over £90,000 would be taxed at 20 per cent.

Under the Scottish Service Tax, over three quarters of households would be better off. Around in one in ten would pay roughly the same as they do now. The rest – the wealthiest 15 per cent of the population – would pay more.

6) CARBON RATIONING AS A FAIR ALTERNATIVE TO GREEN TAXES

The Scottish Socialist Party is a pro-environment party which is prepared to face the truth.

We have a responsibility not just to those who inhabit the planet today, but to future generations as yet unborn who

will inherit the planet tomorrow.

The natural resources of the earth are not ours to devour. Nor can we allow climate chaos to spiral out of control.

We recognize that we cannot continue as before, sleepwalking towards the abyss. The SSP is in favour of a political war against global warming.

In the long term, a socialist Scotland could become Europe's cleanest, greenest nation, a model for the wider world. We could, for example, close down RAF bases, whose 121 aircraft are responsible for 40 per cent of all air travel emissions in Scotland. And by converting fossil-fuelled power stations to renewables, Scotland's carbon dioxide emissions would be reduced by 35 per cent.

But the war against global warming cannot be suspended until we put in place a rational economic system that puts people and planet before profit. Immediately, we need to reduce Scotland's carbon emissions by three per cent a year, as part of our national contribution to tackling the global crisis that stares us in the face.

At the same time, the SSP believes that the mission to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint must be based on social justice. If resources are finite, they should be allocated equally and rationed accordingly, irrespective of income.

Many well-intentioned environmentalists argue in favour of carbon taxes, congestion charges, flight surcharges, road tolls and fuel price increases as a means of restricting personal carbon use.

However, this guarantees that the burden of sacrifice will be borne disproportionately by those on lower incomes.

Rationing by price will not deter the more prosperous classes from consuming valuable carbon. Instead, it will increase existing inequalities, and potentially even drive those on lower incomes into the camp of the anti-environment lobby.

The Scottish Socialist Party believes

that the fair and equitable way forward, nationally and internationally, is to allocate businesses, organisations and individuals an annual quantity of carbon credits, which can be used to buy gas, electricity, petrol, air flights and other forms of carbon. These could then be used or sold as required.

A carbon rationing scheme, along with our other policies, including free public transport, could assist Scotland in meeting and surpassing an annual carbon reduction target of three per cent, without the need for draconian taxes.

Carbon allocations should be worked out fairly, taking into account special circumstances such as climate variation, poorly insulated housing, and geographical position.

Certain caveats would apply, such as increased carbon allowances for those in remote areas with sparse transport links, or 100 per cent grants for insulation for those with energy inefficient homes.

We do not pretend that there is a ready-made scheme which could be applied immediately.

The SSP will campaign for the Scottish Parliament to set up, as a matter of urgency, a special commission including experts and representatives from the different sectors of society to develop a carbon rationing scheme which have the dual aim of, firstly, driving down greenhouse emissions by at least three per cent a year, and secondly redistributing resources to the less well-off.

The natural resources of the earth are not ours to devour. Nor can we allow climate chaos to spiral out of control.

Building a better Scotland

FOR INDEPENDENCE AND DEMOCRACY

The Act of Union was a travesty from the moment it was signed – a stitch-up between the ruling classes of two nations, designed to further their own agenda and to hell with the people.

The intervening three hundred years have witnessed no significant redress of this democratic deficit. Scotland remains the short-changed northern neighbour: a dumping ground for nuclear missiles yet with no say in defence policy; an underpopulated nation yet with no say over immigration.

Scottish troops are still used as the British state's cannon fodder.

Scottish culture and history are still largely suppressed in our schools.

Scottish votes and voices continue to be drowned out, unheard.

The United Kingdom, this nominally multi-national creation, was, and remains, nothing less than an Anglo-centric, centralist state with all political power vested in the Crown and Westminster.

There is no doubting that many Scots on the make have benefited from the Union. Indeed, one such is poised to become Prime Minister. But the people, the ordinary, working people of Scotland, have gained nothing from the Union and lost much.

The SSP has been at the forefront of the call for independence, as a major democratic advance, a means by which, at last, we can decide who, if at all, we go to war with, how we treat our workers, how we run our welfare state and organise our energy resources.

We believe that independence is an idea whose time is coming and that the 2007 elections will see a further surge in support for pro-independence parties.

The SSP was the first party to sign up to the Independence Convention, which now also involves Scotland's two other pro-independence parties. We will continue to support the work of the Independence Convention, whose role is to promote the cause of independence and to provide a forum for all of the pro-independence forces in Scotland to discuss the road forward.

We also continue to back the efforts of the non-party Independence First campaign to bring about an independence referendum in the shortest timescale possible after the May 2007 elections.

If necessary, the SSP will itself introduce a bill to hold an independence referendum within the first year of the new parliament. Even the Blair government, which was lukewarm about devolution, managed to call a referendum on estab-

PHOTO:
Craig MacLean



lishing a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly within six months of coming to power in 1997.

We challenge the pro-Union parties to explain why, if they are so confident that they represent the majority of the Scottish people, they continue to deny the Scottish people the right of self-determination in a democratic referendum.

The bulwark of today's British state is not the Tory Party, who have long since been kicked into touch in Scotland. No, the arch-Unionists in this election are the Labour government. The ex-party of the working class are now giving it big guns for Queen and Coronation Street, warning that armed guards will surely stalk the Tweed and ex-pats will never again see their loved ones south of the border.

But the more ludicrous their arguments, the more surely we all know they're losing.

They are on the run, and the SNP are the pretenders to their throne.

The SSP opposes the SNP's increasingly pro-business vision of an independent Scotland, which promises hundreds of millions of pounds in Corporate Tax cuts to big business. This could only be achieved by plundering our public services.

The SSP is fighting for a different Scotland. Instead of slashing corporate taxes to the level of the Irish Republic, as the SNP propose, we would slash military spending to Irish levels. Scotland's current share of the UK's bloated military budget is over £3billion, while the Republic of Ireland spends just £700million. We would use the extra billions to transform Scotland.

Nor do we subscribe to the bizarre idea that the British monarch should remain the Head of State in an independent Scotland.

Our call is for a Scottish socialist republic, in which the people are sovereign, not some descendant of the house

The United Kingdom, this nominally multi-national creation, was, and remains, nothing less than an Anglo-centric, centralist state with all political power vested in the Crown and Westminster.

of Saxe-Coburg, and not the multinationals who like to squat on our shores till the government subsidies run out.

We seek to throw out the weapons of mass destruction that lurk on the Clyde, and bring our troops safely home. We will fight to become a nation, a beacon, of peace, not an exploited outpost of the dying British Empire.

We will welcome people fleeing oppression, war and poverty, and offer them full rights and a place in our society.

We will cherish our civil liberties, not straitjacket them with ID cards and Criminal Justice legislation. We will live in real hope, not manufactured fear.

We will look after our workers, repealing Thatcher's anti-trade union laws and delivering a fair minimum wage for all, including those under 21.

We have a powerful vision of the nation we can be, in which everyone has rights, and democracy is extended and extended, from proportional representation in all elections to participatory democracy forums at local level, where neighbourhoods can vote on and veto the decisions that affect them.

This is our world, and we will fight tirelessly to bring it into the hands of the people, to bring socialism into being.

We harbour no illusions that independence, in itself, will cause this transformation. But we believe it can help us on our way, by delivering massively increased democracy and making the ideas of socialism – equality, wealth redistribution, peace and human soli-



PHOTO:
Ian Jacobs

diversity – more easily achieved.

Should the referendum on independence be won, and we believe it will, we will argue for the establishment of a Constitutional Assembly, independent of political parties, to draw up a brand new constitution for Scotland to be ratified in a further referendum.

This would not be an appointed panel of notables and celebrities but a democratically elected body, representative of Scotland's geographic, ethnic and gender diversity.

That Constitutional Assembly would be given the task of drawing up a constitution based on two essential, abiding principles – those of maximum democracy (eg no hereditary powers; full proportional representation; no external military control) and maximum equality (eg full and equal citizenship for all who live and work in Scotland; no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexuality, age or disability).

British unionists claim that independence only entrenches nationalist divi-

Our call is for a Scottish socialist republic, in which the people are sovereign, not some descendant of the house of Saxe-Coburg, and not the multinationals who like to squat on our shores till the government subsidies run out.

sions, but we believe it will serve to end petty divisions.

England has much to gain from independence. National cultures can look genuinely outward. History, art, music, sport from across these islands can celebrate its diversity, its national identity and its place in the world.

The Labour government's hamfisted attempt to quantify Britishness, and to enshrine it in citizenship tests and ID cards, only serves to emphasise how ill the trappings of the Union become us.

Through independence, we become ourselves, and enable others to do likewise.

The 2007 election marks the 300th anniversary of the Union. Let's make it the last anniversary, as we unite around a vision of a nation at peace with itself, its past, and the world.

Let's raise the standard of a Scottish socialist republic, for the people of Scotland and the citizens of the world.

Scotland and the union

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A referendum on independence within a 12-month timescale, allowing the people of Scotland to decide whether our parliament should remain subordinate to Westminster, or should be given full power in all areas of policy.
- For a Yes vote in any independence referendum.
- Support for the cross-party Independence Convention and the non-party Independence First campaign.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- A directly elected Constitutional Assembly, representative of Scotland's regional, gender and ethnic diversity to draw up options for a new constitution for Scotland, which would be put to a further referendum vote.

- A nuclear-free Scotland that is outside of NATO.
- Military spending to be reduced to no more than the per capita level of the Republic of Ireland, which would mean slashing the defence budget by £2.5 billion.
- A new relationship with the European Union which would safeguard Scotland's independence.
- All individuals living in Scotland to be entitled to full Scottish citizenship, irrespective of national origin.
- A socialist Scotland based on the principles of equality, democracy, liberty, generosity and solidarity.

Democracy

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- The introduction of participatory democracy at community level by establishing local assemblies with the power to make and veto decisions that affect their community.
- An increase in the maximum number of councillors per ward from 4 to 6, to allow greater proportionality and more representative local government.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- The abolition of the monarchy and all its structural and ideological supports, including the offensive ceremony whereby elected MSPs are forced to swear an oath of allegiance to an unelected monarch.
- No unelected second chamber.
- All elections to be conducted under a genuinely proportional system, and the scrapping of the anti-democratic first-past-the-post system.
- The reduction of the voting and candidacy age to 16.
- The extension of the right to vote to people who are homeless and to those who are in prison.

- Participatory democracy in the workplace.
- Support for the open source software movement and for all public bodies to use open source software where available and appropriate.
- Greater use of referenda to allow ordinary people a say in controversial decisions.

FOR THE MILLIONS AGAINST THE MILLIONAIRES

This is the 21st century, yet parts of Scotland remain scarred with near-Victorian levels of poverty.

Here are epidemics of malnutrition and advanced dental decay in children, families living in housing unfit for human habitation, frail pensioners dying alone in the dark from hypothermia, and cancer patients unable to recover because they cannot afford their medication.

Here are tens of thousands of children living on a diet which is less nutritious than the diet of children in South Africa's poorest townships, contract cleaners in hospitals buying cleaning fluid out of their own dismal wages because their private employer is cutting costs, shattered bus shelters, closed down schools, communities under siege from crime, and generations of families who have never worked.

Poverty is spelled out in ruinous drug and alcohol addiction, heart failure and emphysema, criminal records, trauma and children in care.

This is the 21st century, yet parts of Scotland remain scarred with near-Victorian levels of poverty.

Around a quarter of all Scots, and a third of our children, live in low income households. Over half of lone parent households are classified as poor. A third of all employees earn less than £6.50 per hour.

Scotland is not an impoverished third world country.

Scotland's GDP – in other words the total amount wealth produced per year – is estimated by economists to be around £127 billion – or £25,400 for every single man, woman and child. There is no excuse or justification for poverty.

Yet the statistics paint a bleak picture. Around a quarter of all Scots, and a third of our children, live in low income households. Over half of lone parent households are classified as poor. A third of all employees earn less than £6.50 per hour.

Meanwhile the rich get richer day by day. Since the start of the new millennium, the combined wealth of Scotland's ten richest millionaires has more than doubled, from £2.5 billion in 2000 to over £6 billion today.

This growing gulf between rich and poor is no accident of nature. Successive UK governments have consciously created an army of working poor. People who are paid so little to staff our public ser-



vices, drive our buses, serve in our shops, that they are, in effect, subsidising the lives of the wealthy. The people who can't work, those too young, too sick, too dysfunctional, too old, simply fall through the cracks.

Any attempts by Westminster or Holyrood to alleviate poverty have amounted to tinkering around at the margins.

For all the mainstream parties, there are too many taboos. Progressive taxation is unthinkable. Public spending aimed at reducing poverty is ruled out. Funding for anti-poverty projects is being squeezed.

Yet an anti-poverty strategy which excludes these ingredients is mere dabbling.

The SSP is Scotland's anti-poverty party.

We believe that 'wealth creation' through a free market, where money supposedly trickles down from the top to the bottom, is a fraud.

That locking up people for shoplifting or defaulting on a fine does not deliver justice to a mother whose son has been stabbed to death in the street.

That short-term contracts and anti-trade union laws do not create a productive workforce but a debt-ridden population too riven with anxiety to have aspirations.

The SSP recognises the effects unemployment, job insecurity, job dissatisfaction have. We also want to challenge the damaging and demeaning culture of conspicuous consumption which is widespread in our society and contributes to poverty.

We aim to lift the burden of debt, low wages and insecurity through wealth redistribution at local and national level, improved rights and wages for workers, and an end to draconian debt laws based on fear.

We want to end the pressure on people to work long hours to earn a living wage by introducing a reasonable minimum

wage and a 35 hour week, which would improve our quality of life, giving us time to spend with our families and be active in our communities.

We will also address crime, the brunt of which is visited disproportionately on working-class communities, by making communities safer and creating a system that delivers justice for all.

Our proposal to provide heroin on prescription, as part of an integrated health strategy, was in the past derided as an irresponsible and provocative slogan. It is now increasingly recognised, even by sections of the police hierarchy, as a serious, tried and tested solution, which would bring the problem of addiction out into the open and at the same time reduce crime.

Most burglaries and muggings in Scotland are committed by heroin addicts trying to access money to buy illegal drugs. Removing the need to steal cash to score drugs would remove the impetus towards crime.

The SSP is different from the mainstream parties. We see the world from the ground upwards. We work from the ground upwards.

We reject the culture of deference towards big business which is now rampant within Scotland's four big political parties. The SNP, Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Tories are now engaged in a frenetic contest to offer ever-higher rewards to big business through Corporation Tax and business rates cuts.

Yet the stark truth is that big business shareholders are today devouring greater quantities of wealth than at any time in human history.

Fifteen years ago, Scotland's ten most profitable companies made a combined profit of £3 billion. By 2005, our top ten businesses were able to report combined profits of £13 billion – a 330 per cent increase. Over the same period, the state pension, which is linked to the retail

We aim to lift the burden of debt, low wages and insecurity through wealth redistribution at local and national level, improved rights and wages for workers, and an end to draconian debt laws based on fear.

price index, rose by just 60 per cent.

Instead of pandering to big business and the rich, the SSP believes that we should be standing up against corporate and personal greed.

In 1974, the Labour Party manifesto called for “a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power to working people and their families”.

Since then, there has certainly been a fundamental shift in the balance of wealth and power. But it has been in the opposite direction – away from working people and their families, in favour of big business and the rich.

We believe that it's time to swing the pendulum in the opposite direction: to tax the rich, redistribute wealth and income, curb the power of big business and move towards a society where our wealth and resources are harmonised for the benefit of the people rather than plundered by an elite.

Poverty and wealth

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A new income-based Scottish Service Tax to replace the Council Tax.
- The scrapping of domestic water charges, with household water financed via the Scottish Service Tax.
- Special funding to enable Scotland's 32 local authorities to recruit and train a team of welfare rights workers with special responsibility for identifying and assisting people who are failing to receive benefits to which they are entitled.



- An expansion of locally-based money advice centres and credit unions.
- A change in debt legislation to remove the threat of eviction and house repossession.
- The Scottish Executive to launch in conjunction with Westminster a review of carers' benefits and financial support.
- The extension of concessionary travel to carers.
- The establishment of a cross-party working group, which would involve people affected by poverty and anti-poverty organisations, to address poverty and inequality in Scotland.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- A basic state pension of £160 a week and the restoration of the link between pensions and earnings.

The SSP believes in a socialist Scotland that will stand up to the forces of neo-liberalism and the free market.

- Restoration of benefits to 16 and 17 year olds.
- The restoration of lone parent benefits slashed by Westminster.
- A progressive tax system which will increase the top rate of taxation and reduce the tax burden on those on low incomes.
- An overhaul of disability benefits to remove means testing.
- The increase of all benefits by £30 a week with subsequent annual increases in line with inflation.
- The regulation of banks and building societies to outlaw the practice of charging customers to access their own money, and charging customers who exceed their agreed overdraft limit, with refunds backdated five years.
- The protection of public sector pension schemes.
- Carers Allowance to be replaced with the national minimum hourly wage rate.
- Rigorous new laws to prevent big business avoiding legitimate taxation.
- A new corporate tax regime which forces Scotland's most profitable companies to pay their fair share of taxation, at least to Nordic levels.
- A two tier VAT system, with luxury goods taxed at 20 per cent and VAT on all other goods reduced from 17.5 per cent to its 1979 level of 8 per cent.
- Public ownership of North Sea oil with the profits used for the benefit of the people rather the profiteers.
- A socialist Scotland that will stand up to the forces of neo-liberalism and the free market.

Jobs and workers rights

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A national minimum wage of £8.00 an hour for all public sector workers – two thirds of median male earnings.
- A 35 hour week for all public sector workers.

- The funding of 5000 new apprenticeships in construction-related trades.
- Confiscation of the assets, including factories, offices and equipment, of multinational companies which shift production from Scotland to low wage economies elsewhere.
- Full support for trade unionists forced to take strike action in defence of their living standards and working conditions.
- All public sector trainees to be paid trade union negotiated rates of pay.
- The regeneration of local economies by returning the Uniform Business Rate to the control of local authorities.
- A skills diversification programme involving the Scottish Trades Union Congress, in preparation for the future decommissioning of Scotland's nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons bases.
- The right to jury trials on demand for cases involving compensation claims against employers, for example by victims of asbestos-related disease.
- A 'corporate killing bill' and other legislation that will serve to hold company executives to account for the actions of their companies.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- A national minimum wage of £8.00 an hour for all workers and trainees over 16, without exception.
- A 35 hour maximum working week as the first step towards a four-day working week.
- 12 months' statutory paid maternity leave without loss of rights; and one month's statutory paternity paid leave.
- Five weeks' minimum annual leave for all workers.
- Free trade unions and the scrapping of all laws designed to restrict the rights of trade unionists.

Privatisation and social ownership

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- An end to all PFI and PPP schemes.
- An end to private catering and cleaning contracts in the NHS and education.
- Defiance of European Union laws over tendering where these laws threaten the livelihoods of Scottish workers.
- Mandatory ethical and workers rights provisions to be included in all public sector procurement agreements.
- The establishment of a Scottish national rail corporation to take over the Scotrail franchise when it expires in 2011.
- The creation of ten regional, publicly-owned bus companies, accountable to local councils.
- The reversal of the part-privatisation of water and sewerage and for Scotland's water supply to be municipalised and run by groups of local authorities, along the lines of the police and fire boards.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- The establishment of a democratically run Scottish National Oil Corporation to take over the North Sea oilfields, with the profits used for public investment, including in renewable energy.
- The extension of public ownership into profitable sectors of the economy.
- New forms of public ownership which

The establishment of democratically run Scottish National Oil Corporation to take over the North Sea oilfields, with the profits used for public investment, including in renewable energy.



reject top down nationalisation in favour of democratic management involving workers, communities, consumers and representatives of local and national government.

Safer communities

The SSP will campaign for:

- Replacement of the toothless Joint Police Boards with new community, regional and national police boards, which would hold the police to account and would include elected councillors, MSPs and directly elected community representatives.
- A new drugs policy which will allow free heroin on prescription to registered addicts, under controlled conditions, to reduce petty crime and to undermine the lucrative criminal empires which have been built on the illegal supply of heroin.
- The expansion of drug and alcohol rehabilitation and detox facilities.
- A zero tolerance approach to violence and abuse towards children, women

A system of accountability over judges and sheriffs, with the involvement of organisations such as the Law Society of Scotland and Victim Support Scotland.

and vulnerable people.

- A Scottish-wide strategy to reduce domestic violence, including special domestic violence courts, domestic violence awareness training and rehabilitation programmes.
- All convicted sex offenders to be legally required to undergo a sex offender programme either within the community or within custody, depending upon the level of risk they pose.
- Increased police resources specifically dedicated to monitoring and supervision of sex offenders.
- The establishment of special secure units providing intensive rehabilitation for sex offenders who are judged to pose a continuing risk to the public.
- An end to the practice which allows those accused of sex offences the right to cross-examine their alleged victims in court, and for these principles to be extended into civil litigation proceedings.
- A reduction in Scotland's prison population – already the highest in Western Europe pro-rata to the population – by expanding alternatives to custody for offenders who are not a danger to the public.
- An end to the waste of the police and legal resources devoted to arresting and prosecuting people for the possession of cannabis for personal use.
- Community youth forums across Scotland to identify what amenities are needed in each local area.
- Local youth facilities in every community, run by young people.
- Education, prevention and treatment to tackle bullying.
- A system of accountability over judges and sheriffs, with the involvement of organisations such as the Law Society of Scotland and Victim Support Scotland.
- The right of prisoners to vote in elections, in line with recent legal rulings.
- The restoration of recent cutbacks in

Legal Aid.

- The extension of legal aid to cover workplace and consumer disputes.
- A new fast track appeals system to deal with suspected miscarriages of justice.
- The reversal of all privatisation and PFI in the prison service.
- The expansion of prison rehabilitation programmes, including education, training, psychiatric and psychological support, drug and alcohol detox, rehab and abstinence programmes.
- Resistance to all Westminster interference in devolved matters.
- For the Scottish Parliament to have the right to set its own laws on asylum, drugs, anti-terrorism and media regulation.

FOR TOP-QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

For decades now, the public sector has been lambasted by governments insistent upon the idea that private equals good, public equals bad.

Who are they kidding?

Privatisation has seen our railways decline to a ghost of the service they could have provided, while fares now exceed those of air travel.

Privatisation has seen our medical services shrivel as hospitals close and resources dry up. Privatisation has seen our schools rot and our colleges run by incompetent business people, while student loans rocket into the stratosphere and education becomes a narrow regime of exam-passing and league tables.

Privatisation is a blight on our public sector, from the fire service to social services, housing to hospitals, classrooms to community halls.

The mainstream parties may claim that privatisation is the only show in town, but the public isn't buying it, and nor are we.

The failure of the privatisation agenda is spelled out in Scotland's health crisis. Obesity is rampant, mental illness and

suicide are soaring, cancer and heart disease are in ascendance, the sick are penalised through prescription charges, and life expectancy in some parts of our country is dipping below that of traumatised Iraq and Palestine.

Scotland's health crisis has not come about because people are too ill-informed to know that a salad is better for them than a sausage supper. It has come about because too many of our citizens are poor, overworked, isolated and badly served in terms of amenities and food-shopping.

Scotland's health crisis is rooted in economic inequality. People who subsist on low incomes, who work in monotonous jobs, who live in dismal housing schemes will always be more vulnerable to the temptations of tobacco, junk food, alcoholism and hard drug abuse and will be less motivated to take physical exercise.

They are also more likely to suffer mental illness. Those living in the poorest areas are nearly three times as likely to be admitted to hospital for depression, three times more likely to commit suicide, over four times more likely to be admitted to hospital for self poisoning, six times more likely to be admitted with schizophrenia, and ten times more likely to be admitted for an alcohol problem.

The Scottish Executive has wasted swathes of public money on healthy eating phone lines and glossy leaflets instead of tackling our health emergency with a long-term strategy to prevent and treat.

The SSP will carry on the fight for

Privatisation is a blight on our public sector, from the fire service to social services, housing to hospitals, classrooms to community halls.

We want to build a health service that is absolutely free; that is super-efficient; that is compassionate; and that treats people swiftly, and, where possible, locally.

nutritious, free school meals as a first step in the battle against obesity and poor diet.

We will also campaign for a ban on junk food advertising, and the establishment of free passes to sports facilities for all young people, amongst other initiatives to entrench the principles of healthy living in our population.

While prevention is better than cure, this latter needs attention too. The NHS, once the beating heart of the welfare state, is now as badly in need of intensive care as many of its patients.

We are not opposed to progressive changes which are clearly beneficial to patients and local communities. However, we will oppose will gratuitous hospital closures and 'rationalisation' of services imposed upon communities against their will.

We will campaign for significant investment of public money to refurbish and extend premises, train and employ more nurses, doctors and ancillary staff, and bring essential services, from clinics



to cleaning, back into the public fold.

We will call for the abolition of all prescription charges, and for the NHS to purchase and supply cheap, generic medicines which work as effectively as the expensive brand names, except at far lower prices.

We want to build a health service that is absolutely free; that is super-efficient; that is compassionate; and that treats people swiftly, and, where possible, locally.

Like health, education should be a right rather than a privilege. As things stand, inequality runs rife from pre-school right through to post-grad, where some children are taught in noisy, overcrowded classrooms without enough books to go round, while others are taught in classes of ten, with state-of-the-art resources and access to extra tuition.

The difference is money, and it is a difference that ensures one child grows up to live a broad and prosperous life, while another sees their future narrow to a vanishing point of unemployment and poverty even before they reach their teens.

The SSP seeks to redress this seasick imbalance in life chances, and to end the commodification of education by the business community, who would boil down our higher education system into a thin soup of business studies and management courses at the expense of languages, history and music.

We will pull the plug on the public subsidy of private schools, and instead plough money into state education, enhancing resources, taking on more teachers, and ensuring that all children, including those with special needs, have their needs met.

The SSP seeks to create a new kind of education system, not one characterised by meaningless testing and homogenised curricula, but one where individual learning styles are recognised and accommodated, where democratic par-

participation and egalitarianism are the order of the day, and where education is not a commodity but a lifelong, life-enhancing passion, accessible to all, at any age, from any background, at any level.

We will also fight to expand provision across the social services sector, to ensure there are enough social workers and enough of a support network to enable fragile family units to stay together, to catch the vulnerable before they fall, to get people back on track before they lose their way completely.

We will fight for a well-resourced fire service, whose professionals are well-rewarded and respected, and for an end to the ruthless, arbitrary axing of civil servants, particularly in the frontline services upon which we depend, including customs, pensions, benefits and tax credits.

And we will continue our campaign for the cancellation of Scotland's local authority housing debt, including the debts of councils whose tenants have voted against large scale housing stock transfer.

The SSP will also continue the campaign to rid our public services of the extortionists who would have us in hock for lifetimes to come.

It is a myth that Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or Public Private Partnership (PPP) is just another method of building. It is actually a method of borrowing – and a hugely expensive method, into the bargain.

Under these schemes, private companies get the best of all worlds. They finance the construction of schools, hospitals, roads and other public building projects. They charge exorbitant interest rates over decades, which means that the taxpayer pays for these projects umpteen times over. Meanwhile the financiers rake in colossal profits over a fixed timescale, usually around 30 years. And to add insult to injury, the structures

The SSP would cancel all PFI-PPP projects, thus saving the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds over the next three decades.

themselves become the property of the private profiteers.

The only beneficiaries are the banks and the construction companies who are enjoying a lucrative bonanza at the taxpayer's expense.

Our opposition to PFI and other forms of privatisation is based on the triple principles of democracy, accountability and fairness. Our schools and hospitals are being turned over to private directors who are unelected and unaccountable.

And the deals that are struck between the public and private sector in these projects are grotesquely one-sided, and unfair.

For the sake of a quick fix, and to protect governments from taking hard decisions about taxation, our children are now set to inherit a debt millstone totalling billions of pounds.

The SSP would cancel all PFI-PPP projects, thus saving the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds over the next three decades.

The SSP is Scotland's pro-public sector party. Other parties, including even the SNP, which in the past stood for an expansion of the public sector, are now calling for cuts.

John Swinney, for example, the SNP finance spokesperson, recently launched an extraordinary attack on the Scottish executive for "dragging its heels" in comparison to England on savings (ie cuts) and called for a reduction in Scotland's public sector.

"It's time for the government to help



Scotland's wealth creators [ie business]," he added. In other words, the SNP, which in the first Holyrood election campaigned for a penny on income tax to boost the public sector, is now calling for resources to be shifted from the public sector into the private sector.

The public sector is not some parasitical monster selfishly devouring resources. It is the opposite. It is the public sector which looks after our elderly, our sick, our disabled. It is the public sector which educates our children, which empties the bins, which keeps our streets clean, which answers the 999 calls, which provides our water and disposes of our sewage.

Moreover it is a myth perpetrated by all four mainstream parties that Scotland has a bloated public sector. Only 23.3 per cent of the workforce is employed in public services – a substantially lower proportion than in Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, where the public sector accounts for over 30 per cent of employment.

The public sector belongs to the peo-

The SSP would bring the railways, the buses, the hospital catering companies and other privatised industries back into the public sector.

ple, to serve the people, through libraries, clinics, schools, community halls and other facilities.

Instead of slashing the public sector, the SSP is in favour of expanding it, by employing more nurses, more teachers, more workers providing local services for local communities.

In direct contrast to the SNP, we want to increase the proportion of the workforce who are involved in helping others, and decrease the proportion of workers whose function is to make money for wealthy shareholders.

The SSP would bring the railways, the buses, the hospital catering companies and other privatised industries back into the public sector.

And in a post-independence Scotland we would fight to bring North Sea oil and other energy-generating industries into the public sector, in order that the profits can be ploughed into protection of the environment, developing renewable energy and creating a world-class fare-free public transport system.

General Health

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Free school meals with milk and water for all state school pupils.
- The scrapping of all prescription charges, in line with the Welsh Assembly.
- Free nicotine replacement patches and free stop smoking classes.
- All school children to be entitled to receive and be encouraged to take up a minimum of three hours of physical education of their choice, with a range of alternatives for those who are unable to participate in standard PE classes.
- Funding to enable local authorities to remove admission charges to fitness facilities, including swimming pools, sports centres and gymnasiums.
- Free toothpaste and toothbrushes for

all children and a dental hygiene campaign in all schools as an alternative to water fluoridation.

- The establishment of a network of community-run supermarkets specialising in healthy local produce at the cheapest possible retail prices, starting with areas of high deprivation.
- The establishment of women's health centres providing access to contraception and abortion facilities and cancer screening.
- All women to have the legal right to receive a triple assessment for breast cancer, including physical examination, ultrasound and mammogram.
- Parents to have the option of separate vaccinations for measles, mumps and rubella as an alternative to the triple vaccine, backed up with a high profile publicity campaign to maximise uptake until the safety of MMR is proven beyond all reasonable doubt.
- A ban on vaccines containing thiomersal.
- Serious resources to tackle Scotland's mental health crisis which affects one in five of the population, and is disproportionately concentrated in deprived areas.
- Mental health treatment to be directed primarily towards rehabilitation rather than alleviation of symptoms.
- People suffering mental illness to have access to a full range of treatment options – modern medication, counselling, short- and long-term psychotherapy, occupational therapy, diversional activities.
- Treatment for mental illness to be primarily community-based, though backed up with modern, well-staffed inpatient facilities with single sex wards.
- Respect for the rights of people with mental health problems, including public education to challenge the stigma associated with mental health and derogatory labelling of people with

mental health problems.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- A publicly owned Scottish pharmaceutical corporation which would supply a range of cheap generic medicines for the NHS and work with universities to research new drug treatments. This corporation would sell generic medicines to third world countries at cost price, to help alleviate suffering from Aids and other treatable diseases.
- Investment to be directed towards promoting health, preventing illness and curing disease when it does occur rather than on the profitable symptom-control medicines favoured by the private pharmaceutical companies.
- All medical and scientific research to be published and made available for free on internet databases such as PubMed Central.
- A ban on alcohol advertising.
- A ban on the advertising of junk food.
- All alcoholic products to be legally required to label the exact number of alcoholic units, calorific value and other nutritional information on the label of each container.

The NHS

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A fully democratic and decentralised NHS, integrated with social services within the framework of local govern-

We would also campaign for a publicly owned Scottish pharmaceutical corporation which would supply a range of cheap generic medicines for the NHS and work with universities to research new drug treatments.

The SSP will fight to secure the funding and resources to create a Scottish NHS which would match the best in the world.

ment. The day to day running of the NHS to be supervised by elected health boards consisting of medical professionals, other healthcare workers and local communities.

- The reversal of all privatisation within the NHS, and the cancellation of all existing PFI and PPP projects in favour of public investment.
- Joint planning committees to co-ordinate health and social services, which would involve the harmonisation of wages and conditions, based on levelling up.
- A maximum bed occupancy rate of 85 per cent to ensure there is adequate capacity to cope with any surge in demand.
- Increased capacity in order to achieve a maximum bed occupancy rate of 85 per cent in general wards; and a maximum 75 per cent for intensive care units to ensure there are sufficient available beds to cope with any surge in demand.
- An expansion of primary care services



within a public model. All legislation expanding the role of the private sector in primary care to be repealed.

- A department of alternative medicine within the Scottish NHS to develop free access to alternative and complementary medicines and therapies such as herbal remedies, acupuncture and homeopathy.
- A free counselling and talking therapy service.
- The allocation of NHS spending according to health needs rather than crude population statistics.
- An end to hospital closures except with the approval of the local community.
- The phasing out of private health care and the incorporation of private medical facilities, services and resources into the NHS.
- A charge on private medicine providers to recoup the costs to the public purse of the training and education of their staff.
- A ban on consultants working for the private sector.
- Proper funding for physiotherapy services.
- A living income for student nurses.
- Free childcare for NHS shift-workers.
- Zero tolerance of violence against health workers.
- Staff employed by private contractors to be brought back into NHS employment with NHS pay and conditions.
- The abolition of hospital parking charges.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- The funding and resources to create a Scottish NHS which would match the best in the world.
- The phasing out of all private health-care.

Additional needs

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Free personal care for everyone who needs it, including those under 65 with debilitating conditions such as dementia.
- Free access to autism specific health services which acknowledge that the condition may in some cases be a health problem that can be helped by medical intervention.
- Families of children and adults with autism to have four weeks per year respite provision.
- Support, including financial support, to enable all adults with autism who wish to pursue further and higher education to do so.
- More resources to be directed towards the diagnosis and support of adults with autism.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Free care for everyone who needs it, without means-testing, including those in nursing homes and those under 65 with debilitating conditions such as dementia.
- Increased funding for research into the causes and the most effective treatments for complex conditions such as dementia and autism.
- People with autism to be eligible for all relevant benefits, including those connected with mobility, personal care, housing support and independent living.
- All adults with autism to be given special support to find suitable employment.

Care and support of elderly people

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Full support for the manifesto of Alzheimer Scotland, which includes

Free care for everyone who needs it, without means-testing, including those in nursing homes and those under 65 with debilitating conditions such as dementia.

increased funding for dementia services and dementia drug treatments to be available free on the NHS.

- A standard level of free elderly care services across Scotland's 32 local authorities.
- Central funding to the Care Commission which monitors elderly care projects. As things stand, care organisations are forced to pay the costs of inspection.

Carers rights

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Recognition of the indispensable role of Scotland's half a million carers who contribute £5.3 billion worth of care to the Scottish economy every year.
- Investment of at £10 million in carer organisations to ensure a fully functioning carer-support infrastructure.
- Long term core funding arrangements for carers organisations that will safeguard their existence.
- A cash investment of £135 million a year to allow full time carers to have guaranteed annual breaks from caring.
- Free access for carers to suitable training programmes and an extra £1.5 million to be invested in a programme of Expert Carer Training.
- An action programme to ensure that schools, health authorities and social services identify young carers and provide them with effective professional support.
- At least £1 million a year to provide support services for young carers.



We will also campaign for the following measures, which are outwith the powers of the Scottish Parliament:

- Carers Allowance to be replaced with the national minimum hourly wage rate.

Higher and further education

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- The reinstatement of student grants as a first step towards ending student poverty.
- Investment in affordable, quality accommodation for students, while ensuring that no guaranteed above-inflation rent increase agreements are reached with suppliers.
- The abolition of all fees in the higher and further education sectors.
- The unification of all colleges into a co-operative network of institutions working together rather than competing against one another, under local democratic control.
- Removal of the requirement for 50 per

The SSP is committed to the reinstatement of student grants as a first step towards ending student poverty.

cent business sector representation on college boards, replacing this with representatives from teaching unions, ancillary staff, students, local councils and local communities.

- Encouragement of life-long learning by providing equal educational opportunities for mature students based on experience and prior learning.
- An end to the capping system in Further Education to enable colleges to meet demand for learning in the communities they serve, including evening class provision and ESOL classes (English for speakers of other languages).
- Increased provision of adult numeracy and literacy programmes.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Students to be eligible for housing benefit.
- Employers to be compelled to allow paid time-off for training and life-long learning opportunities.

Schools

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Maximum class sizes of 20.
- No school closures except with the agreement of the local community.
- The termination of all PPP and PFI projects and a return to the principle that education facilities be publicly funded.
- School boards to become fully representative of local communities.
- The opening of all schools and their facilities free of charge for non-profitable learning activities outside school hours and term time.
- Enhanced facilities for pupils with additional needs.
- Democratic and egalitarian restructuring of schools, with plenary staff decision-making and flattened pay scales.

- Participation in decision-making by pupils, so as to embed the practice of democratic principles at the earliest age.
- Support for the Parent Involvement Network as part of a national forum, involving parents, teachers and school students, to help shape and monitor the school curriculum and ensure its relevance to the needs of 21st century Scottish school students.
- Bilingual education to be available for children from ethnic minorities.
- Promotion of Gaelic and Scots, with all their diverse dialects.
- Nutritious free school meals with milk and water for all primary and secondary pupils and replace the private sponsorship of school meals with freshly prepared meals.
- A desegregated education system that allows for the rights of religious observance by all denominations. This would be implemented by consent and agreement rather than by compulsion and enforcement.
- The recruitment of specialist teachers to support existing teachers in the areas of PE, Art, languages, Music and IT to enable class teachers to focus on core skills.
- A long term solution to staffing shortages that does not rely on supply teachers.
- A broadening of the criteria of assessment in schools to ensure league tables are not just exam-based.
- Free publicly funded pre-school education for all three and four year olds in place of nursery vouchers.
- Quality pre-school care for babies and toddlers up to the age of three.
- Free after-school care for all primary and secondary school pupils.
- Clean and well-supervised toilet facilities in all primary and secondary schools.
- An £8.00 an hour minimum wage for all education workers with either holi-

day pay or the entitlement to claim benefits outside term times.

Special education

- The staffing, resources and facilities to make it easier for children with special needs to integrate into mainstream education, while maintaining existing special education units to allow parents to choose what is in the best interests of their child.
- A 1:1 student-teacher ratio for children with classic autism, and a system of regular three-month re-assessments of the effectiveness of teaching strategies.
- Smaller class sizes for children with Aspergers.
- An expansion in the number of speech and language and language therapists in schools.
- Closer involvement of parents in the education of children with special needs.
- The integration of the children of asylum seekers and travelling families into mainstream education, backed up by specialist language teachers and child support workers.
- The fast-tracking of Additional Support Needs Tribunals.
- The development of an anti-bullying strategy within schools, which would include training teachers in how to deal with bullying, and educating pupils on human diversity, including conditions such as autism and Aspergers.

In a devolved Scotland, the SSP is committed to implementing a maximum class size of 20.

Immediate free rail, bus, underground and ferry travel for all pensioners, schoolchildren, students, people with disabilities, carers and benefit claimants.

Transport

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Free bus, rail, underground and ferry travel within four years.
- Re-regulation of Scotland's buses.
- The establishment of a Scottish National Bus Corporation, publicly owned and democratically run by regional boards.
- The transfer of the Scotrail franchise to a publicly owned and democratically managed Scottish National Rail Corporation
- Immediate free rail, bus, underground and ferry travel for all pensioners, schoolchildren, students, people with disabilities, carers and benefit claimants.
- The scrapping of the £500 million M74 extension and other expensive and controversial road-building projects such as the Aberdeen Orbital bypass, the A701 "realignment" through Midlothian, and the Dalkeith bypass.



- A review of all other new road-building projects, with priority given to road safety improvements and better road maintenance rather than bigger and faster roads.
- The scrapping of expensive white elephants such as the proposed Edinburgh and Glasgow airport rail links.
- All money raised by government and local authorities from parking meters, and car parks to be ring-fenced for public transport.
- A system of ferry pricing based on the Road Equivalent Tariff which successfully operates in Norway. This means that the cost of a ferry journey for a bus, lorry or car and occupants should be no more than the cost of a road journey over the same distance.
- The abolition of all bridge tolls.
- 20 mph zones (around schools for instance) with traffic calming in all residential streets where requested by the local community to cut the unacceptably high number of child deaths.
- Expansion of the provision of low-cost park-and-ride schemes to reduce congestion in major towns and city centres.
- A national cycle strategy worked out with cycling organisations to develop an extensive network of safe, well-maintained and well-lit cycle tracks; and high quality cycle training for all primary 6/7 pupils.
- The development of a similar strategy to encourage walking, including the funding of well-lit, properly maintained pavements and footpaths.
- The phasing in of alternative fuels (eg. electric motors, H fuel cells) for public service vehicles.
- The bringing back into public ownership of trunk road maintenance.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Special road tolls for heavy goods vehi-

cles, based on annual mileage as registered on tacographs.

- A shift of heavy goods from road to rail wherever feasible, facilitated by the building of new dedicated freight lines.

Housing

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- The cancellation of Scotland's local authority housing debt with no strings attached.
- The building of 100,000 fully accessible new homes for rent over four years, bringing public sector house building into line with the private sector.
- The right of local authorities to impose a land value tax on land and property worth over £1million to help finance the building of social housing for rent.
- A new minimum housing standard in both the public and private rented sectors, with central heating, double-glazing and high standards of insulation.
- A major renovation programme to include all stock, except where tenants themselves favour demolition.
- The replacement of the 'right-to-buy' policy with a graduated rents discount set at the same level as the discount available for tenants to buy their council homes. After 25 years, tenants would pay zero rent until their tenancy is terminated or transferred to another member of the family.
- An end to all wholesale housing stock transfers and a reversal of those which have already taken place.
- Construction companies to be required to build one new home for rent for every five new homes built for sale. These new homes for rent would be owned and managed by the relevant local authority or community-based housing association and would contribute towards the target of 100,000 new homes for rent.
- All tenants, including new tenants and

The building of 100,000 fully accessible new homes for rent over four years, bringing public sector house building into line with the private sector.

those in the private sector, to be guaranteed secure tenancies in line with the new Scottish secure tenancy agreement.

- The transformation of the appearance of our housing schemes, employing environmental artists, landscape gardeners and others with relevant skills.
- Council and housing association tenants to be involved in all strategic planning decisions.
- The extension of the Scottish Secure Tenancy to private sector tenants.
- All homes identified as 'below tolerable standard' in the private sector to be brought into public ownership if the landlord fails to bring them up to standard within a six month deadline.
- A national construction apprenticeship scheme to turn around the skills shortage in the building industry. This would aim to train 5,000 new apprentices each year.
- The establishment of council tenant forums with real powers at neighbourhood and city-wide level, along with similar forums for housing association tenants and for those in the private rented sector.
- Each tenant forum to be allocated £5 for every house that they represent. This will generate at least £4-5million for the re-establishment of the tenant movement in Scotland.
- Council and housing association tenants to be involved in all strategic planning decisions.
- Homeless organisations to be provided with the resources they require to



end rough sleeping, including hostels as an interim measure until proper homes are available for everyone.

- Safe housing for women/families who have suffered domestic violence or other forms of abuse.
- An end to the public funding of private home ownership.
- Legislation to give local councils the power to ban holiday homes in their area where they believe there is a local housing shortage.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Public ownership and democratic management of the construction industry.
- The reinstatement of housing support grant from central government back to local government, based on pre-1980s levels, increased in line with the retail-price index. This would provide Scotland's councils with sufficient funding to carry out repairs, house building,

Free access to all publicly-owned cultural and recreational centres including art galleries, museums and sports centres.

renovation as well as to reduce rents.

Sport culture and entertainment

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Free access to all publicly-owned cultural and recreational centres including art galleries, museums and sports centres.
- A commitment to revitalise the Gaelic language, including setting a four-year target of making available Gaelic language lessons to all children and adults who wish to learn the language with Gaelic and Scots to be given equal legal status with English.
- Support for the Gaelic Digital Service, and for the necessary infrastructure and coverage to make the service available on all media platforms including the internet.
- Encouragement of the various ethnic cultures that have enriched Scotland over the past half-century.
- An end to the sell-off of football pitches and other sports facilities (such as Meadowbank Stadium) to property developers.
- Senior football clubs to distribute a portion of their seats, free of charge, to pensioners and benefit claimants via local community councils.
- Free football coaching schools in local communities open to girls and boys.
- Coaching and training facilities to allow Scottish athletes to compete at world class levels.
- A national film studio in Scotland to develop the outstanding acting, writing, and film-making talent that has emerged over the past decade.
- A national project aiming to transform the drab appearance of our towns and housing schemes through murals, ornamental gardens, sculpture, fountains, monuments, mazes, performance areas and architectural restoration.
- The replacement of the Scottish Arts

Council with a more open, democratic and representative body.

- More investment in community-based arts ventures.
- The doubling of Scotland's overall arts budget.
- Action to ensure that all publicly-owned sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are fully accessible to disabled people.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- A Scottish Six O'Clock news broadcast on BBC.
- The responsibility for broadcasting to be transferred to the Scottish Parliament.

Local government

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- An end to the Uniform Business Rate, with local councils given back control over non-domestic rates subject to an equalisation mechanism to ensure that all local councils get a fair deal.
- An income-based Scottish Service Tax to replace the Council Tax.
- A fully proportional electoral system, to be achieved by reinforcing the new STV electoral with larger multi-members wards of seven or eight members.
- An end to privatisation, PFI and PPP in the provision of local facilities and services.
- A gradual decentralisation of powers to local councils, for example in transport and health, backed by additional funding. (see appendix: SSP local government manifesto)

The voluntary sector

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A four-year minimum funding period for all publicly funded projects, to reduce the atmosphere of uncertainty

that surrounds those projects which are funded on a year-to-year basis.

- Reduced water bills for voluntary organisations.
- The funding of training programmes for independent community representatives, which would be conducted via the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.
- The democratisation of local planning by ensuring that elected and accountable community representatives have at least 50 per cent representation on all planning forums.
- The nurturing of grassroots democracy by working with the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations and the existing network of community groups to train independent community representatives.
- All publicly funded projects to provide trade union rates of pay and conditions to all paid employees.
- Investment in not-for-profit community transport by funding an increase in services and routes.
- Increased funding for youth work and a reform of the funding allocation system so that national youth and sporting organisations are not forced to negotiate with 32 separate local authorities.

The democratisation of local planning by ensuring that elected and accountable community representatives have at least 50 per cent representation on all planning forums.

Through massive over-consumption, reckless industrialisation and chronic inability to face the truth, we have brought our planet to this impasse. Now we must act to save it.

FOR A CLEAN GREEN SCOTLAND

*"It's hard enough to watch the news
Let alone, explain it to a child,
To cast your eyes across nature,
Over fields of rape and corn,
And tell him without flinching,
Not to fear where he's been born."
The Night I Heard Caruso Sing
(Ben Watt)*

The signs are everywhere. In the creeping rise of the oceans and the low lands that slip beneath them. In the monstrous hurricanes that lay waste to everything they touch. In the chunks of ice that break free from the evaporating ice fields. In the heatwaves and howling storms, the flooding and famine. Our world is in turmoil and we, humankind, are the architects of this destruction.

Through massive over-consumption, reckless industrialisation and chronic inability to face the truth, we have brought our planet to this impasse. Now we must act to save it.



We no longer have the luxury of waiting and seeing. If we fail to take steps, radical and urgent steps, the game's up and there will be no future.

Apocalyptic? We all hope so. But the consensus of opinion amongst the world's leading climatologists would suggest not. They say the clock is ticking and we should heed them.

So what must we do?

The solutions are hard ones, so hold tight.

If the earth warms up by 2 degrees centigrade above pre-industrialisation levels, we reach what becomes uncontrollable. No-one really knows what happens next, but one possibility is a planet no longer able to support life.

The best scientific evidence suggests we have about twenty years in which to make the difference, no more. In that time, we must drastically reduce the carbon emissions that fuel global warming.

To facilitate this, we would establish an independent, expert body, an audit commission, to set and enforce annual emissions targets, and coordinate the changes that would need to take place.

A free, fully integrated and expanded public transport network would be one of the first and most important steps, and would see car usage plummet and cities and towns become places for people rather than traffic, for markets and shops and parks and playgrounds, not car parks and ring roads.

Cancelling all out-of-town retail developments and promoting a system whereby local produce is sold locally, and where the supermarket giants whose aggressive pricing forces down the quality of farming are challenged by subsidised food and farming cooperatives, would further reduce our national carbon footprint. And greatly improve our quality of life.

Through the establishment of a publicly-owned and publicly-accountable energy utility, we could formulate a

nationally coordinated energy plan, involving heavy investment in sustainable energy, notably wind and wave farms, solar power and biomass, and energy conservation, including 100 per cent grants for home insulation.

Where would the money come from?

Scotland is a rich country, an oil rich country. We've got the money.

Unfortunately, it's tied up in nuclear weapons and unnecessary, unwanted road building plans.

Through cancelling Trident and the M74 extension, we would save billions.

Unlike the other political parties, we don't focus solely on individual actions, which account for less than half of all carbon emissions.

Yes, we want to liberate people from their cars – the nurses who have to drive to their jobs at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary despite the heavy parking costs because the public transport is so poor; the workers who have to commute 50 miles a day because they cannot afford a place to live in the city in which they work – and we will.

Yes, we want to ensure that everyone can recycle their waste and act responsibly with regard to precious resources – and we will.

Yes, we want to wrest back control of the food we eat, casting out genetic engineering and other pollutants, and the land, casting out the systems of land ownership that have beggared us all for centuries. And we will.

But we need to do more. And we will.

And unlike other political parties, we don't pretend that lobbying corporations to behave more responsibly with regards to the environment is anything but futile.

Corporations have one priority – profit. Until they can make money through cleaning up their act, they won't. So let's give them no choice, let's demand rather than ask, through carbon capping and toxic waste legislation that doesn't give

We seek a world that is sustainable, forward-looking and in which people can thrive.

them the room to simply buy their way out of trouble.

We understand that environmentalism cannot happen in a vacuum. If we establish ourselves as a living, breathing example of sustainability, we would serve as an example to the whole world, and help to exert pressure on other governments to do likewise.

Someone has to go first – why not us?

We seek a world that is sustainable, forward-looking and in which people can thrive.

A world where the gross imbalance of 80 per cent of our land being owned by 0.02 per cent of the population is redressed, where a countryside turned into a playground for second home owners and 4-wheel drivers is returned to the people who work and live and raise their children there.

A world in which children eat locally grown produce in the school canteen. A world where toxic waste, the vile detritus from our industrial past, no longer haunts us in cancers and respiratory disease, but is fully and safely contained or destroyed.

A world where cities ring with the sound of people, not the drone of traffic, where wilderness is intact and hedgerows thrive, where farming is a life for families not a profit margin for distant corporations, where we all enjoy a sense of roots, of land, of belonging and being.

So that we have a future.

So that we can tell our children, without flinching, not to fear where they've been born.



Energy, pollution and the environment

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Responsibility for energy to be transferred from Westminster to the Scottish Parliament.
- An independent audit commission, to enforce Scottish climate emissions targets of at least three per cent a year, with an accelerating rate of reduction in the future.
- The tightening of building regulations to compel construction companies to use sustainable sources for their construction materials and to ensure that energy efficiency is built into the design of buildings and the appliances fitted.
- Every new building, including private homes, to be carbon neutral by 2011 at the latest.
- Every new building to be required to meet at least 25 per cent of their energy needs from renewable sources.
- 100 per cent grants for insulation and double-glazing in private homes.

An independent audit commission, to enforce Scottish climate emissions targets of at least three per cent a year, with an accelerating rate of reduction in the future.

- All rented housing to have compulsory insulation and double-glazing.
- Investment in sustainable energy technologies.
- The replacement of overhead pylons with underground cables where environmentally beneficial.
- The cancellation of all airport expansion projects, and the Edinburgh Airport rail link, which serves only to increase air traffic.
- A ban on the transportation of nuclear materials on Scotland's roads and railways.
- The protection by law of ancient forests.
- An expanded, fully integrated, publicly owned, fully accessible and free public transport network.
- The cancellation of new road-building projects.
- A reduction in urban traffic by extending pedestrianisation of town and city centres and halting all further development of out-of-town shopping malls.
- A Marine Bill for Scotland, which would prioritise sustainability and the preservation of precious marine habitats and wildlife.
- Diversification and alternative employment opportunities for fishing communities.
- Urgent action to protect our remaining green spaces.
- A conservation scheme to protect wildlife habitats and parkland from industrial development.
- An audit of all contaminated land to identify areas that may pose a potential health hazard and embark on a safe and comprehensive containment or clean-up programme.
- Environmental education to be incorporated into the curriculum of primary, secondary, further and higher education.
- Expansion of the provision of recycling bins to ensure that every household in Scotland has easy access to one.

- Kerbside collection of materials for recycling, including glass, from every household in Scotland.
 - Recycling bins in every public building and workplace.
 - All suppliers of goods to the public sector to be legally required to use biodegradable and recyclable packaging.
 - A ban on any release of genetically modified organisms into the environment and effective testing of food and animal feed imports from countries which do grow GM crops to ensure that food and feed imports are not contaminated.
 - A ban on the sale of GM food products.
 - Public contracts to be refused to any company with a record of dangerous work practices or polluting the environment.
 - Local communities to be provided with information about any plan to construct a mobile phone mast within a one mile radius and to have the right of veto.
 - No new incinerators.
 - Serious waste reduction targets to be set every local authority area, backed by whatever resources are necessary to deliver these targets.
 - £1 million a year to be set aside to promote environmental justice within communities, as promised previously by the First Minister.
- We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:*
- An international 90 per cent reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide by the year 2030 together with significant reductions of other greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Investment in alternative energy technologies, including community-owned wind farms, tidal power and clean coal technology.
 - Public and community ownership of energy, including oil, windfarms, electricity, coal and gas, with a proportion of all profits ring-fenced for investment in alternative energy.
 - An end to the imposition of pre-payment meters on those who owe debts to gas and electricity companies.
 - Refunds backdated by five years to households which have been forced to pay the higher charges associated with pre-payment meters.
 - Increased taxation on aviation fuel, with revenue used to improve high speed rail and ferry links between Scotland and mainland Europe.
 - Resistance to the building of any new nuclear power plants in Scotland, and the setting of a clear timetable set for the decommissioning of existing nuclear power stations.
 - A target date for all public service vehicles to be carbon-free.
 - A target date for all private vehicles to be carbon-free.
 - Stronger regulation of timber imports in order to prevent unsustainably and illegally logged timber entering the country.
 - All biofuels to have sustainability and greenhouse gas certification.
 - The establishment of elected anti-pollution boards at national and local level to monitor and enforce pollution controls, and for these boards to have the power to impose penalties.
 - A ban on any release of GMOs into the environment and increased testing of food and animal feed imports from

An end to the imposition of pre-payment meters on those who owe debts to gas and electricity companies.

We want to see the building of 20,000 fully accessible new homes across Scotland's rural communities for low cost rent to local people.

countries which do grow GMOs to ensure that food and feed imports are not contaminated.

- A shift of focus away from pure economic growth as measured by gross domestic product, in favour of a more balanced measurement of the quality of life.

Land and rural regeneration

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- The building of 20,000 fully accessible new homes across Scotland's rural communities for low cost rent to local people.
- Public and community ownership of Scotland's vast landed estates and corporate farms.
- Local councils to be allowed to set special local taxes on second homes.
- Extra funding for public amenities and public transport in sparsely populated areas that lack social facilities.
- The shop in single shop villages to be exempted from business rates.



- Local and regional initiatives to bring performing artists and productions to rural areas, and encourage the development of sport, drama, live music and the performing arts.
- The release of funds to increase the numbers of mobile and small cinemas serving isolated areas.
- A halt to the closure of small rural schools.
- The setting up of a network of community post offices to replace those lost through UK government cuts.
- Increased funding to the Rural Transport Community Initiative to allow people living in remote and isolated areas access to social, leisure, shopping, health and other services.
- Government grants to enable small farmers to establish farming co-operatives, where they can agree prices for produce and thus resist the power of supermarkets to drive down prices.
- Government grants for local food cooperatives, selling local produce in town centres, villages and housing schemes at reasonable prices.
- Grants and assistance to help farmers convert to organic farming.
- Free school meals with the ingredients purchased from local farmers.
- Financial assistance for farmers/small landowners who plant new hedgerows instead of wire fencing.
- The expansion of the number of allotments in Scotland and the protection of existing allotments from the infringement of developers in recognition of their important environmental, health and recreational role in our communities.
- The establishment of a national body along the lines of SportScotland to promote and support gardening in all its forms.
- 'Road-equivalent-tariff' on island ferries based on the Norwegian model. This means that the cost of a ferry journey for a bus, lorry or car and

occupants should be no more than the cost of a road journey over the same distance.

- Elected and accountable River Boards to remove fishing rights in rivers and lochs from the control of private landowners and bring them under public control, thus allowing the relevant authorities to keep control of fish stocks.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Full trade union rights and protection for farm workers.
- The rural economy to be geared towards providing quality local foods for regional markets, rather than exports.
- Immediate withdrawal from the EU Common Fisheries Policy with a 25-mile offshore limit within which only Scottish fishermen and women can fish.
- Local management of sea fisheries, based on the Finnish model, where environmental sustainability is a key priority alongside community sustainability.

Animal welfare

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Full support for the ban on foxhunting and resistance to any future moves to water down the legislation.
- A ban on the abuse of animals in entertainment and sport.
- An end to battery farming, factory farming and other forms of intensive farming.
- Stringent new legislation for zoos to ensure that animals held in captivity do not suffer ill-treatment.
- Similar legislation to prevent cruelty to animals at market and at slaughter.
- Financial support for co-operatively-owned local abattoirs to avoid trans-

The SSP will campaign for government grants to enable small farmers to establish farming co-operatives, where they can resist the power of supermarkets to drive down prices.

port of live animals over long distances.

- Animal welfare to be incorporated into the curriculum of primary and secondary schools, as part of personal and social education.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the powers of the Scottish Parliament:

- A ban animal testing for cosmetics, household products and military research.
- A ban on unnecessary use of animal testing in medical research.
- The replacement of the ineffective Dangerous Dogs Act with new non-breed based legislation which recognises the responsibility of owners for aggressive behaviour by their dogs.

FOR DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

Welcome to Scotland.

The country where families are dragged from their beds in the darkness of dawn, and dispatched back to torture and murder on a flight paid for out of our taxes.

Where you can join the army and raise a family at 16, but are not entitled to income support, a living wage, or the vote.

Where prominent members of the establishment can still stand up with impunity and declare gay men and women to be unfit parents on account of their sexuality.

Where the generations who built our health service and welfare state are paid a



humiliating pittance of a pension, and where disabled people are means-tested and marginalised.

Where battles of centuries gone by are fought out on our streets with broken bottles and knives in the name of religious allegiance.

And where racism flourishes like a weed, fed and watered by tabloid editors and government ministers.

Since the last election, Scotland has moved forward in some areas. Civil partnerships for same-sex couples have been introduced in a far calmer atmosphere than that which accompanied the proposal to scrap Section 28 in 2000.

And such has been the power of protest that government in Scotland has been forced to admit that locking children up in Dungavel is unacceptable.

But much, much more is needed to make this a tolerant, welcoming nation in which people, not prejudice, can flourish.

Women, who comprise slightly more than half the population, continue to be

The SSP believes that decent wages and working conditions can go a long way to redressing the balance, restoring the dignity and respect which women have an unalienable right to.

underpaid and undervalued, through low wages and a failure to recognise the importance of child-rearing and caring for elderly relatives, the burden of which falls disproportionately on women.

The debacle that followed the Single Status Agreement highlights the fact that discrimination against women also blights the lives of men. Female council workers should have had their pay increased and been compensated for years of underpayment. Instead, male workers' wages were dragged down to the level of their underpaid female colleagues.

Meanwhile, a culture that portrays women as sex objects, and in which working in the sex industry has been allocated a certain raunchy glamour, degrades everyone's sexual identity.

The SSP believes that decent wages and working conditions, including a working wage for women or men who choose to be full-time parents, can go a long way to redressing the balance, restoring the dignity and respect which women have an unalienable right to.

We further believe that it is time to stop criminalising prostituted women and to start helping them to access routes out of prostitution – punishing instead those who utilise sexual services and keep alive this vile industry in human beings.

Young people also deserve respect. Instead, they are ruthlessly exploited as cheap labour and targeted by loan-sharks masquerading as respectable high street banks and credit card companies. And blamed for rising crime and disintegrating communities.

The SSP will fight to establish a decent minimum wage for all, including 16 to 18 year olds. We will campaign for the restoration of student grants to guarantee educational opportunities for everyone, from any walk of life.

Further, we seek to place young people at the hearts of our communities,

through youth forums and youth centres, school student unions and the right to vote at 16. This will deliver both rights and responsibilities to our greatest asset – our future.

At the other end of the scale, our elderly people are being put out to grass and forgotten after a lifetime of hard work and service. We will campaign for free access for pensioners to sports, leisure and educational facilities designed specifically for pensioners.

We will campaign to restore the link between pensions and earnings, to abolish rents for pensioners in social and sheltered housing, to end the insulting practice of means-testing for benefits and to provide free fuel and phone facilities during the often deadly months of winter.

The bullying of old people is matched only by the government's bullying of disabled people and those with long-term illnesses, through trying to confiscate their benefits and force them into unsuitable, low-paid jobs.

This is no way to treat people, especially those already struggling to cope with health problems.

The SSP recognises that disability is an important political issue. Disabled people experience disadvantage and oppression, not due to their impairments, but as a result of discrimination and barriers erected by the society we live in. The SSP considers disabled people as equal citizens who are entitled to participate and contribute to society.

We will never let up our struggle to provide equality of opportunity, and the means to access those opportunities, through financial, legislative and practical support.

That support should include disabled access to public buildings and public transport, increased support for personal assistants/carers – including respite – and financial support to facilitate independent living within communities.

The SSP welcomes the legal rights won by our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered citizens, but will continue the fight for pension rights, and to protect LGBT asylum seekers who face deportation to countries where they will be persecuted because of their sexuality.

Refugees come here seeking sanctuary. In too many cases they find only degradation and persecution. They are victims at the hands of a chaotic asylum system which crushes hopes and atomises families through seemingly arbitrary deportation, insensitive interviewing processes, and lack of support. On top of that, they are barred from working and forced to endure the stigma of a voucher system.

We will campaign to close down Dungalvet detention centre (ie prison) for asylum seekers. We will oppose dawn raids, and fight for the right to citizenship to all who seek sanctuary in Scotland. We need their skills, their culture and their companionship every bit as much as they need us.

In years to come, we hope to welcome people to a Scotland where people fleeing persecution find peace; where young people are recognised, not as cannon fodder, but as citizens in their own right; where women workers, including those in the home raising kids, enjoy high status and good pay; and where pensioners are rewarded for their lifetime contribution to society.

Where families, be they traditional nuclear units, lone parent families, same-sex couples with adopted children,

We will never let up our struggle to provide equality of opportunity, and the means to access those opportunities, through financial, legislative and practical support.

We want to see a Scotland where colours and creeds unite, to form a diverse and dynamic nation in which our differences do not divide us, but render us stronger.

or any other combination of adults and children are supported and nurtured.

Where colours and creeds unite, to form a diverse and dynamic nation in which our differences do not divide us, but render us stronger.

What a Scotland that would be.

Women's rights

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Free, publicly funded nursery places for all pre-school children.
- A minimum 12 months' maternity leave, on full pay for public sector workers, with the right to return part time if requested.
- After-school, weekend and holiday clubs in every locality for school age children.
- The 'morning after pill' to be available free of charge via NHS outlets, pharmacists and women's centres.
- Equal access for all women to abortion services regardless of where they live in Scotland.



- Greater funding for Women's Aid and other agencies which provide refuges, helplines and drop in centres for women who have experienced violence, abuse, rape and child sexual abuse.
- Free environmentally-friendly sanitary protection for all women.
- The expansion of initiatives such as 'Routes Out of Prostitution'.
- The decriminalisation of women involved in prostitution and increased police resources to enforce a clamp down on kerb-crawlers in red light districts.
- The closure of saunas and massage parlours which operate as legalised brothels.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- A minimum 12 months maternity leave on full pay, for all workers, with the right to return part time if preferred.
- The average worker's wage for any parent, male or female, who chooses to care full-time for their children or any other dependants.
- Equal representation for women at all levels of government.

Youth rights

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A maintenance grant for all college and university students.
- The abolition of student fees.
- The funding of 5000 new apprenticeships.
- Community youth forums across Scotland to identify what amenities are needed in each local area.
- Funding to set up local youth facilities in every community, run democratically by young people.
- Free access to all publicly owned cultural and recreational centres includ-

ing sports centres, arts galleries and museums.

- Free bus and ferry travel for school, college and university students.
- The right to vote and stand for office at 16.
- Support for current initiatives to establish a national school students union to support and represent school students facing bullying, harassment and discrimination. The union would also represent students on new democratic school boards.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- An end to discrimination against young workers by establishing a uniform national minimum wage for all workers over 16 years. (The SSP would set this figure at two thirds the median male earnings, currently £8 an hour).
(Note: The SSP has an active youth wing, Scottish Socialist Youth. Visit their website at www.ssy.org.uk)

Disabled people's rights

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A network of staff to be employed and trained specifically to provide full support and assistance to those applying or being reassessed for disability living allowance and incapacity benefit.
- Full funding for community care.
- Increased support for those who care for or assist family or friends with disabilities, including education, respite and counselling services.
- Comprehensive and enforced standards of accessibility on all public transport.
- Housing to be adapted to meet the needs of disabled occupants on request.
- All new public housing and buildings to be barrier-free.
- Existing public buildings to be con-

The SSP will campaign for an end to discrimination against young workers by establishing a uniform national minimum wage for all workers over 16 years

verted to ensure access for disabled people.

- Increased resources to promote and provide training in British Sign Language, for assistants, public sector workers, education employees and others.
- BSL to be taught in all schools, with free courses in BSL at all levels for any adult or child who wishes to develop their skills in the language.
- Reduced waiting lists for Community Care Assessments, rehabilitation and Occupational Therapy services.
- Mandatory parking fines for those non-disabled badge holders who misuse disabled parking bays. These fines to be ring-fenced for disability support services.
- A consultation with disabled people and their personal assistants or carers on the provision and location of more disabled parking bays close to shops, cinemas, hospitals and other facilities.
- Free access for all disabled people to educational, sporting, cultural and other leisure facilities.
- Increased funding to allow local authorities to meet the demand for Direct Payments, which allow disabled people to receive the assistance necessary to allow them to live fulfilling independent lives in the community.
- The guaranteed right of disabled people to autonomy, including the right to choose where to live and to plan their



own packages of personal assistance and/or care through local authorities.

- The guaranteed right of disabled people to be treated with dignity, including at the end of their lives.
- Disabled children and old people to have the same right to life and medical treatment as non-disabled people; no disabled people to be starved to death because the medical profession considers them untreatable.
- Adequate resources, advice and support for disabled adults to obtain suitable employment which they find enjoyable and fulfilling and which has a career structure.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Replacement of the Disability Discrimination Act with fully comprehensive, enforceable civil rights

Adequate resources, advice and support for disabled adults to obtain suitable employment which they find enjoyable and fulfilling and which has a career structure.

legislation as demanded by the disabled people's movement. This legislation will be backed up by heavy fines and even imprisonment for the bosses of organisations that do not comply with it. Such rights will include: access to information in appropriate formats; full access to education at all levels; the right to employment for all disabled people and fair treatment at work; equal access to all goods, facilities and services.

- Full accessibility to all goods, facilities and services including public transport, public buildings and the majority of housing stock. This would include wheelchair users, those with mental health impairments, autism and Aspergers syndrome – which may include the need for quiet, unstressful and uncrowded environments.
- A total reform of the benefits system to remove all barriers to disabled people moving in and out of work; and to provide all disabled people with an income equal to at least the minimum wage plus additional allowances to take account of the additional costs of being disabled.
- Resources to enable all disabled people the opportunity of to living independently in a fully accessible and attractive house with appropriate personal assistance.
- Free care without means testing for all those who could benefit from it, with freedom of choice over the means of obtaining this personal assistance and/or care.
- The right for disabled people to participate fully in all aspects of society
- British Sign Language (BSL) to be recognised as an official language of an independent Scotland, as it currently is in the UK.

Elderly people's rights

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- The scrapping of rents for pensioners who are housing association or council tenants, including for those who live in sheltered housing.
- Free access for pensioners to sports, leisure and educational facilities designed specifically for pensioners.
- Forums which bring together elderly and younger people to exchange experiences and break down age barriers.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- The basic state pension to be increased to £160 a week and linked to prices or earnings, whichever is the higher.
- Reduction of the retirement age to 55, for men and women.
- Retirement to be genuinely voluntary, with the right of workers to continue whether part-time or full-time beyond retiral age.
- The pension industry to be taken into the public sector and to be administered transparently and democratically.
- Free heating, phone rental and TV licenses for all pensioners.

LGBT rights (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Guaranteed long term funding for community projects such as the Glasgow LGBT Centre and the development of similar facilities in other towns and cities.
- Educational projects in schools and colleges aimed at eradicating homophobic and transphobic bullying and isolation.
- The strengthening of civil partnership legislation to full equality with marriage, including religious ceremonies.
- Measures to tackle rural LGBT isolation through funding outreach and support projects across Scotland.

- LGBT officers for local authorities, with secure funding for LGBT projects.
- Full implementation of anti-discrimination laws in provision of goods and services.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Equal immigration rights, ending the two year co-habitation rule and granting leave to remain to LGBT asylum seekers.
- Equal pension rights, including survivors' rights for all pension schemes.

Racism and sectarianism

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A nationwide anti-racist roadshow to go into schools and community centres throughout Scotland. This would aim to involve well known actors, footballers and musicians in an ongoing project designed to ridicule racism.
- An immediate end to dawn raids.
- All public information to be provided in the main languages of Scotland's ethnic minority communities.
- Full support for organisations challenging racism and sectarianism, including Show Racism the Red Card and Nil By Mouth.
- Work with football clubs, in particular the Old Firm, to eradicate sectarianism from our culture.
- Recognition of travellers as an ethnic group.

The SSP is committed to implementing an immediate end to dawn raids

For Dungavel Detention Centre for asylum seekers to be turned into a museum of anti-racism and multiculturalism.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- The granting of Scottish citizenship to all people residing in Scotland at the time of independence, including asylum seekers and so-called "illegal residents".
- Incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Declaration on Racism into Scots Law.
- A warm welcome to any asylum seekers who come to Scotland in the future, and the offer of Scottish citizenship to those who want it.
- For Dungavel Detention Centre for asylum seekers to be turned into a museum of anti-racism and multiculturalism.



FOR PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

This is the second Scottish Parliamentary election fought in the shadow of the Iraq war.

In 2003, the Scottish Socialist Party went to the polls on an uncompromising anti-war platform.

We never flinched from that stance. We have always remained firm in our publicly repeated conviction that invading a sovereign state that posed no threat to us, particularly one so impoverished by international sanctions as Iraq, would lead, not to justice and peace, but to untold bloodshed and endless recriminations.

Tragically, those who opposed the invasion of Iraq have been proven 100 per cent right. To date, according to research published in the esteemed medical journal, *The Lancet*, 655,000 civilians in Iraq have died as a direct result of the US/UK invasion and occupation, as a result of bombing and gun battles, or from the disease and starvation unleashed by the shattering of the civil infrastructure and the national economy.

Iraq is so badly damaged it can scarcely function. People are streaming from its borders, to anywhere that will take them. Others are hanging onto life, and sanity, by their fingertips. Others have been sucked into the bloody morass of the conflict which only escalates with every sunset.

Meanwhile, US business interests are looting with impunity. In the guise of reconstruction, contracts were handed out like sweets by a US-appointed interim administration; these have proven to be nothing more than a license to pick-pocket money from the body of Iraq as it bleeds to death.

The case for going to war was never made. In the US, the Bush administration fabricated a lie across the raw wound of 9/11.

Here, the Labour government shifted

and shifted the goalposts. First, it was Weapons of Mass Destruction; a claim shored up by little more than hot air and a plagiarised student essay dressed up as a dossier.

Then it was Saddam Hussein, the murderous dictator and – though this was rather more underplayed by government – former ally of the West.

This supposedly humanitarian war, fought to ‘free’ the Iraqi people from the yoke of repression. In practice, their lives are now worse, more dangerous and desperate, than ever they were even under the man who was gorily executed in the closing days of 2006.

Finally, we were told, the war was to stabilise the Middle East; a tinderbox to which the US and UK have now applied a match.

George W Bush was trounced at the US mid-terms over Iraq, and is bullishly trying to push through further troop commitments to Iraq before his party loses control of Congress.

Here, the Labour government is losing hearts and minds as surely as it has done across the Middle East, and more and more Scots are looking to independence as an escape hatch from a foreign policy so brutal and unthinking it has brought us unimaginable shame and rendered us a major target for terrorist attack.

Not only that, it has dragged off legions of our young men and women to a war zone they neither desire nor deserve to be in. Empires need their cannon fodder, and the British Army sets out to find it in schools in working-class housing schemes, amongst unemployed and disaffected youth, wherever there is a bleak future and a paucity of life chances.

Many of these young people have been killed. Others are traumatised, or injured. Some have gone AWOL, dropping off the face of the earth rather than returning to its furnace in the Gulf.

We will fight to have the army recruit-

The SSP will work with others across the UK, across Europe and across the Atlantic for the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Afghanistan and Iraq...

ment officers banned from our schools and colleges. We will also campaign for a pardon for those who have ‘deserted’ and for all soldiers returning from war to be given the medical/psychiatric attention they need plus the opportunity to retrain in a civilian career.

Because, if we have our way, they will be returning from war, forever.

The SSP will work with others across the UK, across Europe and across the Atlantic for the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, and for an end to our involvement in this and any further imperialist adventures abroad.

In a pattern that has been repeated over and over again during the past 300 years, Scottish regiments have been catapulted to the frontline of these wars.

Our Parliament in Holyrood had no say in these invasions. However, it is still the Scottish regiments which are being sent to the frontline in Iraq, as they have been in other conflicts over the past 300 years. This further underlines the need for true self-determination and for Scotland to unshackle itself from a union that still apes its days of empire.

We seek a relationship with the wider world based on cooperation, peace and solidarity with our fellow human beings.

We will campaign for socialism in Scotland and offer friendship and support to those working to the same ends across the world – to those resisting neoliberalism, military occupation, genocide, national and cultural oppression.

We fully support the Palestinians in

their struggle for self-determination against US-sponsored brutality; the Colombian trade unionists in their battles for justice against Coca-Cola; the left wing governments in Venezuela, Cuba and other Latin American countries which are standing up to the might of the USA; the indigenous peoples across the world fighting back against racism; the anti-war and pro-peace organisations; the green groups and co-ops; all those whose tireless fight against injustice forms a string of lights across the world that will one day illuminate it whole.

We fight for peace and for the people to inherit the earth.

War and peace

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- A declaration by the Scottish Parliament calling for the immediate withdrawal of UK troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- A declaration by the Scottish Parliament opposing any UK involvement in US or NATO led military action against Iran, Syria, North Korea or anywhere else.
- A declaration from the Scottish Parliament opposing the use of Scottish airports and airspace for US “rendition” and secret torture flights, or the transportation of military personnel and hardware.
- The transportation of nuclear warheads on Scotland’s roads, railways and waterways to be prohibited.

We will also campaign for the removal of all nuclear weapons from Scotland – with no loss of wages for workers employed in the industry.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament’s powers:

- No Scottish involvement in US-led military action in Iraq, or against Iran, Syria, North Korea or anywhere else.
- The removal of all nuclear weapons from Scotland – with no loss of wages for workers employed in the industry.
- Scotland’s overall military budget to be brought into line per capita with that of the Republic of Ireland, saving £2.5 billion for pensions, housing and free public transport.
- Guaranteed employment and/or retraining with no loss of pay for workers who would no longer be employed in the defence industry and special funding earmarked for local communities currently dependent on defence spending.
- A complete ban on the use of Scottish airports and airspace for CIA “rendition” and secret torture flights, or for flights transporting US troops or military hardware.

International co-operation

In a devolved Scotland the SSP is committed to implementing the following:

- Solidarity with all those resisting globalisation and neo-liberalism worldwide, including trade unionists, anti-poverty campaigners, national liberation movements, environmentalists, and small farmers’ and peasants’ movements.
- Ethical procurement policies by all public bodies, and opposition to the award of contracts to companies who fail to observe basic ethical standards on child labour, poverty pay and environmental degradation.
- Support for the stance of those governments resisting globalisation and imperialism, such as in Cuba and Venezuela and for the peoples around the globe struggling for self-determination.

- Support for the Palestinian people in their just fight for an independent homeland; and for Israeli dissidents and peace campaigners.
- Support for all other peoples struggling for national self-determination.
- The incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights within Scots law.
- Agricultural and industrial subsidies and grants distributed in Scotland to be vetted to ensure they do not contribute to increased impoverishment or environmental degradation overseas.

We will also campaign for the following measures, which are not within the Scottish Parliament's powers:

- Fair trade country status for Scotland,
- The immediate and total cancellation of debt from the poor countries of the Third World to the rich countries of the First World.
- International pressure to close down the United Nations' Security Council and to democratise the General Assembly – the sovereign body of the UN.
- The refoundation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as a Fair Trade Organisation (FTO) – ensuring minimum environmental and social standards are met in internationally traded products. This new organisation would be democratic – and the system of 'green room' decision making, where more powerful countries plan strategies in private – would be banned.
- The replacement of international lending institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund with an international clearing organisation – to ensure debts are written off and reparation paid to countries who have suffered at the hands of the current system.
- Full support for the introduction of a Tobin-like tax on all cross-border commercial transactions, reducing a major cause of economic instability and providing a fund for international development.
- A new and radical style of open and transparent diplomacy, with all negotiations and deliberations to be held in public.
- The abolition of all perks and privileges for diplomats – Scottish diplomats to be drawn from among ordinary working people and to receive the average wage of a skilled worker.
- A truly internationalist Scotland that welcomes refugees and supports all those struggling worldwide against political, economic and national oppression.
- The withdrawal of Scotland from NATO and the initiation of an international campaign for its abolition.
- A referendum to allow the people of Scotland to decide whether to remain within the European Union, or to move towards Norwegian-style independence from Brussels.
- The funding of schemes to encourage young Scots to teach and work on overseas development projects.
- A worldwide alliance of socialist and progressive political parties, trade unions and grassroots organisations.
- Scotland to be an international force for peace not war, for social justice not corporate profit.

The SSP is committed to solidarity with all those resisting globalisation and neo-liberalism worldwide...

Making a difference: the SSP in Holyrood

With the election in 2003 of six MSPs and two councillors across five regions of Scotland, a new era opened up for the Scottish Socialist Party.



Going from a new party with a sole MSP to a team of eight public representatives, the SSP now had the opportunity to prove itself a real ‘party of the people’ in action.

Everyone remembers the buzz of excitement when Rosie Kane held up her palm with “My oath is to the people” on her induction into parliament or when Colin Fox leapt over the barriers in Meadowbank Stadium on election night on hearing that he had won the Lothians seat for the SSP.

These were the first signs that this party would be different. Our MSPs have been the conscience of the parliament.

It was the SSP which turned the spotlight full glare on the unjust Council Tax, which hammers low income households and barely tickles the rich. It was the SSP which forced politicians to start to address the junk food culture in our schools by campaigning for nutritious free school meals. It was the SSP which, by pushing for free prescription charges, forced the government to extend free medicine to tens of thousands of chronically ill patients.

The SSP has also gone where other parties fear to tread. Before 2003 the treatment of asylum seekers was no-go area for the career politicians of other parties.

Through practical work in Glasgow

with refugees fleeing persecution, and talking honestly about their plight, Rosie Kane and Pollok Councillor Keith Baldassara have held up a mirror to both the parliament and Glasgow City Council and forced them to acknowledge the truth about the brutal immigration policies of the British government.

Other politicians, including in Glasgow where most asylum seekers are concentrated, wash their hands of the problem by hiding behind Westminster legislation that denies MSPs power over 'reserved matters'. In contrast, the SSP has successfully used the machinery of government at local and national level to challenge dawn raids, the incarceration of children in Dungavel and prejudices about asylum seekers.

As New Labour in the Scottish Executive and local councils have pushed a privatisation agenda in education and health, SSP MSPs and councillors have aligned themselves unequivocally on the side of workers in struggle and communities faced with cuts in social budgets.

All of the SSP MSPs and councillors have been involved in local campaigns to stop school and hospital closures. A number of these campaigns have been successful: the campaigns to save Lismore Primary School in Edinburgh; Renton and Christie Park primary schools in West Dunbartonshire and Howford special needs school in Glasgow.

Carolyn Leckie, as a former health professional, has been at the forefront of the Lanarkshire Health United campaign to save Accident and Emergency departments in three hospitals in Central Scotland. She has consistently fought the creeping privatisation of the NHS. This has included campaigning against a PFI contract for the new Larbert hospital and opposing Lanarkshire NHS Board's attempt to install the first private GP surgery in Harthill.

She now has begun to set in motion

All of the SSP MSPs and councillors have been involved in local campaigns to stop school and hospital closures.

the machinery of a private members bill to ensure that the attempted privatisation of GP services can never be repeated elsewhere.

Carolyn has also highlighted the scandalous treatment of our elderly people in private care homes that are more interested in profit than people.

Frances Curran and councillor Jim Bollan occupied Leven Cottage, the only council-run care home in Alexandria, in a six-month long battle to keep it open, extending over Christmas 2004. By mobilising mass support in the community, the campaign was successful and the elderly residents were able to remain in what had become their home. Jim and Frances also helped, along with the local community and SSP members, to ward off attempts to close the Vale of Leven Hospital in a campaign which has been ongoing for six years.

Wherever workers have been forced to strike or demonstrate in defence of their jobs and conditions, the SSP's public representatives have been with them on the picket lines and in the streets. They

Wherever workers have been forced to strike or demonstrate in defence of their jobs and conditions, the SSP's public representatives have been with them on the picket lines and in the streets.

Over the last four years, SSP MSPs have presented three bills to the Scottish Parliament, each of which was aimed in its own specific way at redistributing wealth from the rich to the rest.

have always considered it more important to spend their time with workers in struggle, listening to them and encouraging them to hold out for victory, than sitting on the cosy parliamentary benches sheltered from the harsh realities of working class life.

Instead they have used the parliament to highlight the justified grievances of working people; they have brought nursery nurses, public sector and council workers right into the heart of the parliament, allowing their voices to be heard in the corridors of power.

Overt the last four years, SSP MSPs have presented three bills to the Scottish Parliament, each of which was aimed in its own specific way at redistributing wealth from the rich to the rest.

Colin Fox's 'Abolition of Prescription Charges Bill' would have scrapped the £6.35 tax on ill health. Despite winning the backing of the powerful Health Committee, the bill fell at the first vote. However, on the very day of the vote, the Scottish Executive published a review of prescription charges which promised to update and extend the range of exempted illnesses. Without the SSP, tens of

The SSP's five-year campaign to get free school meals in Scotland has had a major impact on public health awareness and won the argument many times over.

thousands of chronically ill people would still be paying exorbitant prescription charges for vital medicines.

The 'Abolition of Council Tax and Introduction of a Service Tax Bill' was also defeated on the parliamentary vote with all main parties, including the SNP and Liberal Democrats – who claim to be in favour of scrapping the Council Tax – ganging up to prevent a very popular bill becoming law.

This bill would have scrapped the Council Tax entirely for all those on an annual income of less than £10,000 and levied a progressive charge on people's personal income to fund local government jobs and services.

It would have immediately benefited most pensioners and low-income families, improving their disposable income by hundreds of pounds annually. At the other end of the scale, the rich would have had to pay progressively more which they can easily afford.

The SSP's second Free School Meals Bill won the backing of a truly impressive range of organisations and individuals from across civic society, including trade unions, teaching and health professionals, anti-poverty networks, children's charities and single parent groups. A national consultation received one of the highest response rates of any bill with over 500 responses, 97 per cent of which were in favour of giving all Scotland's primary school children a free and healthy school dinner.

Disgracefully, the bill was blocked by a parliamentary committee before the full parliament had an opportunity to discuss or vote on the bill. It has now been put on ice until after the election when the SSP will bring the fight for free school meals back into Holyrood.

Nevertheless, the SSP's five-year campaign to get free school meals in Scotland has had a major impact on public health awareness and won the argument many times over. Concretely it has

pushed the Executive into providing free fruit and milk for all P1 and P2 school-children and influenced many local councils to introduce free breakfast clubs.

SSP MSPs have consistently used parliament to voice their opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and Britain's very own Weapons of Mass Destruction, Trident.

All of our public representatives and hundreds of grassroots party members have regularly joined the CND and Trident Ploughshares protests at Faslane nuclear base.

Many have been arrested and imprisoned for their actions, as part of a wider campaign of direct action against Britain's nuclear weapons in which every public representative of the SSP is obliged to participate.

Rosie Kane even spent seven days in Cornton Vale women's prison for her involvement in protests against the weapons of death and destruction that have been imposed on Scotland against the will of the Scottish people.

With the support of the SSP's caseworkers, regional organisers, research and administrative staff, and the party membership, the SSP's public representatives have reached out to thousands of ordinary people across Scotland struggling with everyday problems, including workers facing redundancy, Farepak customers, disabled people, communities fighting to save green spaces and resisting phone masts, waste dumps, private housing estates and motorways.

The Scottish Socialist Party with its direct campaigning approach has succeeded over the past four years in making a real difference to people's lives in big and small ways.

Our MSPs and councillors have not just talked the talk; they have walked the walk. They deserve to be re-elected, along with a new batch of Scottish Socialist MSPs and councillors.



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SSP local government manifesto

Socialists set to storm the town halls

INTRODUCTION

For 30 years, local communities across Scotland have experienced local services and facilities suffering through neglect, under-investment, closures and cuts at the hands of the Tories and New Labour. New Labour has been responsible for cuts and privatisation schemes even more severe than under the Conservatives.

When the SNP get influence in the council chamber their record is little better – PFI privatisation in Perth and pay cuts in Falkirk. Local communities are crying out for change and for a real say in local decision making.

On May 3rd, the same day as the Holyrood elections, many councils across the country will face a long overdue shake-up with the introduction of elections using the Single Transferable Vote. Even with the limited proportional nature of this particular system – multi ward seats of only 3 or 4 – the political make up of many councils could be very different. Gone will be the days of ‘one party state’



councils like Glasgow being dominated by Labour, having 94 per cent of councillors but with less than half of the popular vote.

But just as the Lib-Lab Executive in the Scottish Parliament has failed to stand up against the cuts and privatisation agenda of New Labour at Westminster, none of the establishment parties will even try to work for real change in local communities. In contrast, Scottish Socialist councillors have a proud record of participating in successful community action to protect and promote local services.

ACTION IN THE COMMUNITIES

At the last local authority poll, two SSP councillors were elected – Keith Baldassara in Pollok and Jim Bollan in Renton, West Dunbartonshire.

The SSP in Pollok were at the centre of the community fightback that saved the Jack Jardine Centre, with an occupation of the community centre when the Labour council threatened closure.

SSP Councillor Keith Baldassara has recently been at the centre of campaigns to preserve bus routes and for locals to have a say in the siting of mobile phone masts. Keith works closely with the community in trying to improve services and give local people a real say in the local issues that affect their everyday lives.

Last year in West Dunbartonshire, SSP Councillor Jim Bollan joined residents of Leven Cottage in a successful 24-week occupation. As a result, the closure-threatened care home for the elderly won

a reprieve. The local SSP actively supported the occupation of the centre for nearly six months and the people of Renton have been able to secure the facility.

All SSP council candidates elected in May pledge not only to take the interests of their local communities into the council chamber, but also to campaign alongside the communities, including taking part in direct action when necessary.

All SSP councillors pledge to hold at least weekly surgeries and to participate in as much local community activity as possible.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE: FROM COMMUNITY PLANNING TO COMMUNITY DEMOCRACY

People across the country have experienced the Scottish Executive, quangos, NHS Trusts and local councils imposing cuts on community services that local people vehemently oppose. For example, motorways can be bulldozed through communities despite local opposition. How often have people voiced the exasperated cry 'who decided this?' as yet another hospital, school, playing field or bus route is axed.

The Scottish Executive is aware of the deep disquiet over this democratic deficit. But their response to the wishes of people to have a real say in issues directly affecting their communities is almost literally paper thin – policies on community planning that sound grand on paper but in reality amount to little more than locals being given the opportunity to question council officials on plans that the council will press ahead with regardless. There are plenty of token attempts at consultation in an attempt to create an illusion of community planning.

The SSP will campaign to:

- Establish council tenant forums with real powers at neighbourhood level along with similar forums for housing

Local communities are crying out for change and for a real say in local decision making.

association tenants and for those in the private rented sector.

- Allocate each tenant forum £5 a year for every house that they represent. This will encourage the re-establishment of the tenant movement in Scotland.
- Involve council and housing association tenants in all strategic planning decisions.
- Give community councils and community forums consultative votes at local authority area committees, which meet throughout the year.

Nationally, we will campaign to:

- Move towards a system of local participatory community democracy along the lines of the successful model that operates in Southern Brazil. This would involve creating local neighbourhood assemblies, open to all residents, with the power to make and veto decisions affecting their communities.
- The provision of new powers to allow community councils, community forums, tenants and resident organisations consultative votes annually on a local authority's budget and service proposals.
- The right of local people to have the final say over local spending decisions, school closures, traffic schemes and policing.

SSP councillors have already been championing the right of local communities to own and run their own services. All SSP councillors elected in May pledge



to fight for a major shift towards genuine community ownership and control of local facilities and for local communities to have a real say in decision making.

POLICIES TO TRANSFORM LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The SSP have a wide range of radical policies of direct relevance to local communities (more detail on these can be found elsewhere in the manifesto):

- Free school meals for all schoolchildren
- A maximum class size of 20 in all schools
- Free childcare
- An end to the backdoor privatisation of our services
- 100,000 new homes for rent
- The cancellation of council housing debt to free up funds for repairs, upgrading and new building
- No Housing Stock Transfer

SSP Councillors have already been championing the right of local communities to own and run their own services. All SSP councillors elected in May pledge to fight for a major shift towards genuine community ownership and control...

- Equal pay for female council workers by levelling up, not down
- Community democracy – including the right of local people to have the final say over spending decisions
- Improved facilities for young people to reduce crime, drug abuse and anti-social behaviour

FOR GREATER DEMOCRACY WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

It is to the detriment of democratic scrutiny that, for the third set of elections in a row, New Labour has arranged for council elections to be held on the same day as the Holyrood poll. This allows many councils to avoid the increased scrutiny that would inevitably follow if council elections were held separately.

We will campaign for local authority and Scottish Parliamentary elections to be held on different days.

The new Single Transferable Vote (STV) election for councils is a step forward from the old unfair ‘first past the post’ voting system. But it is a very limited step forward. With only three or four seats per ward, this will be one of the least proportional of any proportional voting system operating worldwide.

The SSP supports proportional representation for all elections. We favour the introduction of the Single Transferable Vote system for council elections, with large wards of 7 or 8 councillors to allow for greater proportionality. This would help local councils to reflect the breadth of opinion in the area. If there can be multi-ward seats of 7-8 in Northern Ireland, why not in Scotland?

Vote for a councillor that will stand up for local communities!

On 3rd May, remember that the ballot paper for local councils will use the STV voting system. Place ‘1’ beside the name of your SSP candidate. Put people, not profit, first!