

# Scottish Socialist Party



Holyrood Election Manifesto 2003



another Scotland is possible

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# About the SSP

*The Scottish Socialist Party is Scotland's newest, fastest growing, and most radical political party.*

*Launched just four years ago, the SSP is already challenging the Tories and Liberal Democrats for the mantle of Scotland's third party.*

**THE RISE** of the SSP has been spectacular. From a handful of branches in a few cities, the SSP has expanded into every corner of Scotland. Over 70 branches of the SSP are now active across Scotland.

From Gaelic-speaking communities in the Western Isles to Punjabi-speaking communities in inner city Glasgow; from forgotten former mining villages in Ayrshire and Fife to textile towns in the Borders, the SSP reflects the diversity of modern Scotland.

Our members span the whole range of working class Scotland: firefighters, nurses, call-centre workers, students, lone parents, shipyard workers, pensioners, ancillary workers, teachers, construction workers, clerical workers.

Some of Scotland's most talented writers, actors, artists and musicians are allied to the SSP. The party has also attracted radical doctors, lawyers and other professionals into its ranks.

The SSP is a modern, youthful, forward-looking party which has refashioned socialism for the new Scotland of the 21st century. We reject the bland conformism of the mainstream parties and stand in the honourable tradition of those courageous men and women down through the ages who have challenged conservative orthodoxies and striven to make the world a better place.

## Principles

Our politics are not dictated by electoral pragmatism. We do not sanitise our



*FIRED UP: a striking firefighter signs up to join the SSP at an FBU rally*

principles in pursuit of media respectability. Politics should be more than a popularity contest: it should be about principles and morals, about what is right and what is wrong.

The pro-big business consensus of the establishment parties has generated widespread disillusionment in politics. It is not the people, but the jaded main-

stream politicians who are to blame for tumbling turnouts at the ballot box.

In this manifesto, we set out a comprehensive set of policies which we will battle for within Holyrood. Some of these policies will provoke palpitations at the heart of the Scottish establishment.

Others are simple, common sense measures which can bring about modest improvements in peoples' lives.

At the same time, we openly proclaim our long term commitment to building a new society free from war, free from poverty, free from exploitation, free from racism.

### Global Capitalism

On a world scale, the gulf between rich and poor has reached mind-boggling proportions.

A few hundred global billionaires now own as much wealth as half the world's population.

Entire continents are being turned into gigantic slave labour camps, their natural resources stripped bare by the godfathers of global capitalism.

And for the millions of innocent people who are unfortunate enough to have been born in the wrong country, the shadow of death and mass destruction looms large.

The SSP is an internationalist party that stands on the side of the poor, the oppressed, the exploited across the world. We are part of a worldwide movement which is opposed to unjust wars, like the war in Iraq, and which rejects the mania of the capitalist free market.

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*PLUNDER: Multinational oil companies rip off billions from the North Sea. The SSP will campaign to Scotland's oil wealth for the people*

### Independence

Here in Scotland, we stand for an independent socialist republic that can become an international symbol of fairness and justice, a Scotland that will resist and defy the fatcats and the warlords.

We live in a country that is scarred by poverty, low pay, decaying public services, sub-standard housing, ill health, crime, alcohol and hard drug abuse. Yet we have a skilled, educated workforce and natural resources in abundance.

This glaring contradiction between the potential and the reality has one simple explanation: the people of Scotland have no real control over the resources of this country.

Our land is owned by aristocratic lairds and absentee landlords. Our oil, gas, electricity and transport are owned by business tycoons. Our financial institutions are controlled by millionaire bankers.

The SSP wants to change Scotland from top to bottom. That will not be achieved overnight. It will require a mass party of socialism, with a majority of MSPs, hundreds of local councillors, and mass active support in the workplaces, communities and universities.

May 1 2003 could be an important step down that road. The election of a group of Scottish Socialist MSPs would electrify Scottish politics. It would ignite a bonfire of debate about the future of Scotland and the feasibility of socialism.

### Radical

In this election, we are up against wealthy opponents, bankrolled by rich business interests. As a young, rising party which is rooted in the working class we cannot hope to compete financially with the big four.

But there is widespread cynicism towards the old, established political parties which are increasingly seen as out of touch and even corrupt.

The SSP in contrast is recognised as

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new, fresh, idealistic, principled. At the same time, we have set out in this manifesto policies which are popular, which are practical, which are radical and which can be delivered in the short term.

That is a potent combination. If we can now grasp this opportunity to make a mighty leap forward in 2003, we will be well on course to conquer Scotland for our 21st century brand of anti-authoritarian, libertarian, democratic socialism.

*WAR ON POVERTY: the SSP marches at the huge anti-war demo on February 15*



# For a free socialist republic

*The Scottish Socialist Party is a pro-independence party. Our goal is to create an independent socialist Scottish republic.*

**AFTER CENTURIES** of centralised rule from London, the establishment of an elected Scottish Parliament represented an important democratic advance. It opened up the government of Scotland to greater public scrutiny and accountability than ever before.

At the same time, the partial PR system ensures that the parliament in Edinburgh more accurately reflects the diversity of Scottish political opinion than either the Westminster parliament or local government.

*NO NUKES:  
the majority of  
Scots want rid  
of nuclear  
weapons from  
our shores*



Nonetheless, as it stands, the Scottish Parliament is a PG certificate parliament whose powers are heavily censored by the grown-ups down in Westminster.

Just look at the powers Holyrood doesn't have:

- It had no power to prevent Scotland being press-ganged into George Bush's blitzkrieg against the people of Iraq.
- It has no power to rid Scotland of the monstrous weapons of mass destruction on the River Clyde.
- It has no power to welcome refugees fleeing persecution and poverty into our underpopulated country.
- It has no power over our vast oil reserves, our electricity, our gas or the nuclear power plants in Scotland.
- It has no power to increase the pitifully low state pension, or to end the degrading means tests forced on our elderly citizens.
- It has no power to combat exploitation in the private sector by raising the disgracefully low level of the national minimum wage.
- It has no power to force big business to pay its fair share of taxation.
- It has no power to scrap our draconian anti-trade union laws which are outrageously biased in favour of employers.
- It has no power to break the power of criminal drugs gangs by legalising and licensing the sale and use of cannabis.
- It has no power to scrap or reduce VAT on domestic fuel or other basic necessities.



- It has no power to set its own overall spending budget, or even to borrow money to finance extra spending. It can only shuffle money around.

- It has no power even to choose its own electoral system.

A vote for the SSP is a vote to shake off Westminster rule and bring all of these powers under the democratic control of the Scottish people.

It is also a vote to use these powers to transform Scotland into a 21st century socialist democracy.

We reject the scaremongering of those who claim that Scotland is too small, too weak, or too poor to go it alone and defy the new world order of the global billionaires.

We repudiate the fictional claim that in the new globalised economy an independent Scotland would be powerless to tax the rich, wipe out poverty or initiate

*ON THE MARCH: the SSP raises its banner in every corner of the country*

large-scale investment in public services.

Britain has a top tax rate of just 40 per cent. It also has some of the most dilapidated public services in the European Union and a poverty rate of 30 per cent.

In contrast, Denmark, a small independent nation the size of Scotland, has a 63 per cent top rate taxation. It also has some of the most impressive public services in the world and a child poverty rate of just five per cent.

Another small country with high quality public services and lavish social welfare programmes is Norway.

Like Scotland, Norway has a massive

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oil industry. But in Norway, most of the oil industry is publicly owned, generating vast revenues for public spending.

Even the private oil companies in Norway are forced to pay 78 per cent tax on their profits, compared to 40 per cent paid by oil companies in the UK.

Neither Denmark and Norway are socialist countries. Right wing parties are currently in power in both. In common with the UK, both states are monarchies.

Yet some of the economic and social policies implemented in these two small countries lay bare many of the myths that have been swallowed whole by Scotland's four mainstream parties.

Yes, you can tax the rich. Yes, you can have public ownership of North Sea oil and other profitable industries. Yes you can impose higher taxes on big business. Yes, you can invest in top quality public services.

It is not economics, but politics that dictates that big business in Scotland and across the UK makes sky-high profits while poverty runs rampant and public services disintegrate.

### **Ambition**

The SSP has the ambition of winning power and establishing an independent socialist republic that will stand up to the economic power of the multinationals and the political power of Washington, London and Brussels.

Our goal is to build a harmoniously integrated economy based on democratic social ownership of land, industry,

*Scotland would be turned into the greenest, cleanest country on the planet with all our electricity needs generated by wind and wave power within a decade. Weapons of mass destruction would be scrapped with the money squandered on Trident used instead to build new hospitals, homes, schools and community centres.*

energy, transport and finance.

Every day, wealthy shareholders plunder £30 million from North Sea oil profits, while the 5 million people of Scotland receive just 5 per cent of that sum, £1.5 million.

In a democratic socialist Scotland, the £13 billion annual revenues from North Sea oil would be used to transform Scotland's public services and lift out of poverty hundreds of thousands of low paid workers, pensioners, lone parents and students.

Our trains, buses and ferries would be taken back into the public sector as a first step towards a free public transport system.

Scotland would be turned into the greenest, cleanest country on the planet with all our electricity needs generated by wind and wave power within a decade.

Weapons of mass destruction would be scrapped with the money squandered on Trident used instead to build new hospitals, homes, schools and community centres.

### **Limitations**

We recognise the limitations of Holyrood and have set out in this manifesto a list of around 200 detailed policies to improve the health service, education, transport, the environment and the other areas over which Holyrood has responsibility.

These changes could be implemented by the Scottish Parliament even within the UK straitjacket and would change for the better the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

An SSP majority or minority government in Holyrood would immediately set about implementing these policies. At the same time, we would strive to convince the people of Scotland to break free from the United Kingdom and create a liberated, independent, socialist Scotland.



# Six fast track pledges

*In 1999, the newly launched SSP returned one MSP to the Scottish Parliament. Since then Tommy Sheridan has worked with other backbenchers from various parties to force through change.*

**HE LED** a revolt in parliament which defeated the Scottish Executive over warrant sales. He mobilised mass support across Scotland and even won the backing of 35 MSPs for his Free School Meals Bill.

If that's what one Scottish Socialist MSP is able to achieve, imagine the impact a group of six, eight or more Scottish Socialists could make in Holyrood.

Because of the delicate political balance of forces in Scotland, it is even possible that a team of Scottish Socialist MSPs could hold the balance of power within the Scottish Parliament after May 1.

We would not follow the path of the Liberal Democrats by swapping our principles for a few ministerial seats. The SSP would instead vote on an issue by issue basis, supporting progressive legislation and opposing regressive legislation.

At the same time, we will use any political leverage we have to build wider cross party support for our six key pledges.

A group of Scottish Socialist MSPs will launch a campaign inside and outside parliament for the following short term measures:

## **1** Abolish the Council Tax in favour of a new Scottish Service Tax based on income

Under the Scotland Act, the fiscal powers of the Scottish Parliament are severely restricted. Holyrood is forbidden to vary top rate taxation, Corporation Tax, or VAT.



*BAD NEWS: the cruelly unfair Council Tax has left thousands of Scots in debt*

But it does have control over council finance, including the power to switch to a new system of local taxation

The Council Tax was concocted by Michael Heseltine and John Major as a fallback when the Poll Tax collapsed. It was and remains a blatantly unfair Tory tax, which protects the wealthy while punishing low paid workers and their families.

The differential last year between the

*We would not follow the path of the Liberal Democrats by swapping our principles for a few ministerial seats. The SSP would instead vote on an issue by issue basis, supporting progressive legislation and opposing regressive legislation.*

*The differential last year between the top earner in Scotland, Sir Ian Woods, and the average hospital ancillary worker was 20,000 to one. Yet the maximum differential in Council Tax bills is just three to one.*

top earner in Scotland, Sir Ian Woods, and the average hospital ancillary worker was 20,000 to one. Yet the maximum differential in Council Tax bills is just three to one.

A family living in a tiny high rise flat worth £30,000 will pay around 25 per cent of the value of their home in council tax over ten years. Over the same period, a family living in a £2 million luxury mansion will just pay 1 per cent of their income in Council Tax.

Under our Scottish Service Tax plan, household bills would be scrapped entirely in favour of individual bills based on income. The new local tax would be set at a uniform rate across

*RAISE THE BANNER FOR EQUALITY: the Service Tax would make the rich pay their share*



Scotland, with the revenues allocated to councils on the basis of need.

### Benefits

Over 77 per cent of Scottish homes would be better off. Many low income households would stand to save £20-£25 a week from the change.

At the other end of the scale, the wealthiest 16 per cent of households would pay more. Many of these households have benefited from a cash windfall totalling tens of thousands per household since the abolition of the old rates system. The bill for that windfall was picked up mainly by low income households.

There are a small number of households – around 7 per cent – who would neither gain nor lose from the Scottish Service Tax.

The Scottish Service Tax would be collected by the Inland Revenue, using the already existing machinery for income tax collection.

In contrast to the Council Tax minefield, it would be simple, efficient and inexpensive to administer and collect.

Under the new plan, business rates would be set and retained locally by councils. All council authority finance workers would be guaranteed continued employment, though some may be redeployed in welfare rights programmes to assist senior citizens and others on low income to claim and receive benefits to which they are entitled.

### The Scottish Service Tax will work as follows:

All individual income below £10,000 (£200 a week) would be exempt from the Scottish Service Tax. Only income above £10,000 would be liable for tax.

Income between £10,000 and £30,000 would be taxed at a rate of 4.5 per cent. This means that a worker earning £20,000 would pay £450 (Nil on the first £10,000; plus 4.5 per cent on the next £10,000).

Income between £30,000 and £50,000 would be taxed at a rate of 15 per cent.

Income between £50,000 and £90,000 would be taxed at a rate of 18 per cent.

Income over £90,000 would be taxed at a rate of 20 per cent.

Individuals will be eligible to apply for 'exceptional earnings consideration'. This would specifically apply to those whose earnings are irregular.

For example, there are members of Scotland's artistic community who earn little or nothing for two or three years, then receive a block payment equivalent to several years salary.

In these instances, provision will be made to calculate average earnings over a four year period and adjust the Council Tax bill accordingly.

### **Cost of replacing the Council Tax with the Scottish Service Tax:**

*The introduction of a Scottish Service Tax based on the figures we have proposed would generate extra revenue rather than cost money.*

*Based the most recent figures, there would be an overall surplus of £410 million as a direct result of replacing the Council Tax with a Scottish Service Tax.*

*This figure would include £280 million savings in Council Tax benefits which the Benefits Agency would no longer require to pay.*

*However, even if Westminster refused to return that cash in full to Scotland, under the Barnett formula Scotland would still be entitled to receive 8 per cent or £22 million – bringing a net gain to the Scottish budget of £152 million.*

*Moreover, because the Service Tax would be more efficiently collected at source by Inland Revenue, there would be further estimated savings of up to £133 million a year, providing a potential net surplus of at least £285 million.*

*This would ensure ample resources to protect all local council jobs and improve services.*

*Over 77 per cent of Scottish homes would be better off. Many low income households would stand to save £20-£25 a week from the change.*

## **2 Provide nutritious, free school meals for every state school pupil in Scotland**

In June 2002, Tommy Sheridan's free school meals bill was voted down in the Scottish Parliament by an alliance of Labour, Tory and Lib Dem MSPs.

This was despite overwhelming 75-80 per cent public backing and a broad-based campaign in support of the measure which included children's charities, churches, trade unions, public health groups, anti-poverty groups, dieticians and local government representatives.

Even within the parliament, despite pressure exerted on backbench MSPs from party whips, 35 MSPs from five of Scotland's six political parties backed the free school meals bill.

*DINNER TIME: the Free School Meals Bill would ensure at least one nutritious meal a day for every Scottish school student*



Scotland has notoriously high levels of child poverty – which have grown rather than diminished under New Labour. Scotland also has an atrocious health record which is linked directly to poor dietary habits.

A group of Scottish Socialist MSPs would revive the free schools bill.

This would be the biggest anti-poverty, pro-health measure yet enacted by the Scottish Parliament. It would instantly assist 100,000 children in Scotland who live in poverty, yet who are ineligible for free school meals.

It would also remove the stigma of degrading means tests which deters many children and parents from claiming school meals.

Our free school meals bill would set minimum nutritional standards, ensuring that all children have access to at least one healthy meal a day, accompanied by free milk and water.

At the same time it would boost the uptake of school meals and undermine the junk food culture which pervades our schools.

**Cost of introducing free school meals:**  
*In the short term it would cost £174 million a year, which is less than one per cent of Holyrood's annual budget of £22 billion.*

*But in the long term this initiative would save public money. According to a recent National Audit Office report: "Treating obesity and its wider costs to the economy in lower productivity and lost output is estimated to cost the NHS £2.5 billion every year."*

*Over the past two decades, Scotland has been gradually turned into a sweatshop economy. Every day, a vast army of Scots go to work in call centres, fast food restaurants, shops and hotels for a pathetic pittance.*

*Scotland's share of this loss is estimated to be at least £250 million a year.*

### **3 Introduce a £7.32 minimum wage for all Scottish public sector workers**

Over the past two decades, Scotland has been gradually turned into a sweatshop economy. Every day, a vast army of Scots go to work in call centres, fast food restaurants, shops and hotels for a pathetic pittance.

But it's not just the private sector that is guilty of exploiting low paid workers. In the NHS, in local government, even in the civil service, several hundred thousand essential workers are paid less than the official European Decency Threshold of £7.32 an hour.

The UK national minimum wage currently stands at £4.20 an hour for over 21s and £3.60 an hour for 18-21 year olds. Under 18s are excluded.

The Scottish Parliament does not have the power to increase the disgracefully low national minimum wage set by Westminster, nor to remove the discrimination against younger workers.

But it does have the power to set a new minimum wage in the Scottish public sector.

There are 490,000 workers who are employed by the Scottish Executive, either directly, or indirectly via NHS trusts, local authorities and quangos such as Scottish Water.

The current national minimum wage for over 21s is set at 38.1 per cent of male median earnings.

We are proposing a £7.32 minimum wage for all workers, including 16-21 year olds, which works out at 66.6 per cent, or two thirds of median male earnings.

This is exactly in line with the Low Pay Unit's target for the level of the national minimum wage across the UK.

This would strike a mighty blow against poverty in Scotland. It would

indirectly put pressure on the private sector to raise wages in order to attract staff. It would force Westminster to review the pitifully low level of the current national minimum wage.

**Cost of introducing a £7.32 minimum wage for Scottish public sector workers:**

*This measure would cost around £350 million a year.*

*One method of funding this measure would be to disband Scottish Enterprise, which costs £450 million a year, pays each of its 10 directors over £100,000 a year and has failed to generate sufficient new jobs to justify its existence.*

*It should also be noted that the Scottish Parliament has failed to spend its allocated budget in any of the past three years. It underspent by £485 million in 1999/2000; by £718 million in 2000/2001; and by £643 million in 2001/2002.*

*We would also generate additional money by setting a maximum wage of £100,000 a year for all public sector managers and consultants.*

**4 Create 24,000 jobs with a 35-hr maximum working week across the public sector**

A generation ago, the then Secretary of State for Scotland, Willie Ross, promised to resign if unemployment ever reached 100,000 in Scotland.

Today, official unemployment in Scotland does stand at 100,000, despite dozens of changes to benefit rules designed to force people off the unemployment registers. It should also be noted that Scotland's unacceptably high level of unemployment persists even though we have just reached the end of a 10 year long upswing in the economic cycle.

With the economy now moving into recession, Scotland is set to suffer a blizzard of closures and redundancies which will spread like a disease into all sectors of the Scottish economy.

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**Economic freeze**

In this coming economic freeze, thousands of small businesses will be declared bankrupt. And as unemployment rises, tax revenues will fall and the public sector will be squeezed. This in turn will lead to further job losses and a general downward spiral of decline.

Again, the powers of the Scottish Parliament are severely curtailed in the sphere of economic regeneration. But one vital measure it can take to slash unemployment is to cut the working week of public sector employees to 35 hours.

This would generate an extra 24,000 jobs. It would allow us to absorb the workforce of Scottish Enterprise which we propose should be closed down. With this single policy initiative we can gener-

POVERTY PICKETS: striking ancillary workers at the Inverclyde Royal Hospital demonstrate. Many of them earned less than £5 an hour.



*We stand for a publically owned, democratically controlled and totally transparent food industry which will produce and supply cheap, safe nutritious food.*

ate more jobs than Scottish Enterprise has created in its entire lifetime.

At the same time, by introducing a 35 hour week without loss of pay, we can raise the morale of Scotland's public sector workforce and challenge head-on the workaholic culture that successive Tory and Labour governments have cynically cultivated.

**Cost of introducing a 35 hour week in the public sector:**

*The Scottish Executive would incur £67 million of non-wage costs to take on an extra 24,000 workers.*

*Our preliminary estimate is that extra wage bills will cost between £300 million and £400 million spread across Scotland's local authorities, NHS trusts and other employers.*

*We propose using part of the parliament's underspend to finance this measure.*

**5 End PFI and clear the private profiteers out of Scotland's public services.**

The SSP will fight to clear the private profiteers out of the NHS, education and other public services.

In the NHS, privatisation of catering, cleaning and other services has been a disaster.

Cost-cutting by private contractors in the NHS has undermined standards of hygiene and nutrition and led to deteriorating wages and conditions for essential workers.

The SSP will also fight to cancel all PFI projects and continue capital investment in schools, hospitals and other amenities using public money borrowed from the Public Works Lending Board.

It is a myth that PFI is just a method of funding. In fact it is a method of borrowing – and a hugely expensive method at that.

The only beneficiaries are the private building companies and banks who have grabbed the opportunity of lucrative profits subsidised by the taxpayer.

**Swindle**

The new Royal Edinburgh Infirmary illustrates the folly of the PFI swindle. The new hospital has 25 per cent fewer staff and 33 per cent fewer beds than the old hospital that it replaced.

Financed by private finance, the hospital is now owned by a consortium headed by the Royal Bank of Scotland. It cost the private investors just £184 million to build - but will cost the taxpayer almost £1.5 billion in payments to the consortium over the next 30 years.

*PIE IN THE SKY: PFI promises new schools and hospitals but delivers generations of debt and huge profits for big business*



*An uncompromising statement of opposition to war by the Scottish Parliament would put Scotland at odds with Westminster and Washington. But it would put Scotland on the same side as the vast majority of nations and on the side of the overwhelming mass of the world's population.*



cede that there is marginally more chance of an alien invasion from outer space than of an attack on Washington or London by Iraq.

This is a war for control over the Middle East and its resources by American big business interests.

The US government is stuffed full of oil tycoons who have turned their hand to politics, including three of its most powerful figures, George W Bush, Dick Cheney and Condoleeza Rice.

*SCOTLAND SAYS NO: 100,000 march against war in Glasgow while a few miles away the Labour Party gives Tony Blair a standing ovation*

### Warnings

Even the removal of Saddam Hussein over the blood and bones of thousands of ordinary Iraqi people will not be the grand finale.

There have been ominous warnings of further wars to come – against Iran, against Syria, against North Korea.

An uncompromising statement of opposition to war by the Scottish Parliament would put Scotland at odds with Westminster and Washington. But it would put Scotland on the same side as the vast majority of nations and on the side of the overwhelming mass of the world's population.

Such a declaration of opposition would greatly reduce the possibility of Scotland being targeted for retaliatory terrorist attacks.

But most important of all, it would be a powerful gesture of solidarity with the thousands of innocent men, women and children of Iraq who are now on death row for the crime of being born in the wrong country.

As well as fighting for the Scottish Parliament to stand up for peace, the SSP will also encourage and support direct action and civil disobedience by the people of Scotland against war.

We will argue for full backing to those transport workers, such as the train drivers at Motherwell, who refuse to handle materials destined to assist the destruction of human life in Iraq.

All our MSPs will join and help to build anti-war protests – and will be prepared to go to jail if necessary in support of peace.

### Cost of opposing war in Iraq:

*It would cost nothing to oppose war. But it could cost the British Exchequer up to £4 billion to wage a war on Iraq.*

*Scotland's share of this cost would be £320 million – cash that should be spent raising pensions and improving our schools and hospitals.*

# 200 steps to a new Scotland

*In this section, we set out around 200 detailed policies for Holyrood. Each of these policies could be legally implemented by the Scottish Parliament. Although we do not expect to form the next government of Scotland, we nonetheless have a responsibility to set out our stall and to explain to the voters of Scotland how the SSP will act if we become the biggest party in Holyrood in the future.*

## Action on poverty

The Scottish Socialist Party is Scotland's anti-poverty party. It is shameful that in the 21st century, large swathes of the Scottish population live under the shadow of poverty.



**IT IS** a double disgrace that these figures are rising under New Labour, despite the much hyped 'social inclusion' policies of the governments in Westminster and Holyrood.

According to a new report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the proportion of the population living in poverty in Scotland has climbed from 21.5 per cent to 23.5 per cent since the setting up of the Scottish Parliament. The report further reveals that 30 per cent of children in Scotland live in poor families while 25 per cent of our pensioners live on the breadline.

For a significant minority, poverty is a lifelong prison sentence. From childhood through adulthood, hundreds of thousands of Scots are forced to struggle daily to pay the bills and to buy food and clothes for themselves and their families.

Many more move in and out of pover-

ty at different stages of their lives as their circumstances change. It is impossible to calculate the exact percentage figure, but it is likely that a majority of the Scottish population are touched by poverty at some stage in their lives.

It is especially alarming that the recent rise in poverty has taken place against a background of a growing economy and falling unemployment. In the past, poverty tended to be associated with unemployment and ill health. Today, there is a growing army of working poor.

Those who try to justify the existence of poverty claim that the concept is relative rather than absolute. As average income rises, the measurement of poverty changes. Even the poorest people in Scotland are materially more prosperous than the billions who live on the edge of starvation across the Third World.

All of this is true. But poverty is not



just about material deprivation. In an affluent society, the psychological damage caused by poverty can be severe. People who have been left behind financially tend to suffer social isolation, anxiety as they try to juggle with debt, guilt towards their children, relationship breakdown and low self esteem.

It is no coincidence that those with least money are most likely to spend money on alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. People who live in permanent poverty can expect to die ten years younger than those who are well off.

The Scottish Parliament is hamstrung by its lack of political muscle. It has no power over pensions, social security benefits or the level of the national minimum wage. It has no power over the top rate of income tax.

Nor has it the power to provide our pensioners with a decent life by raising pensions and restoring the link with earnings.

But that is no excuse to do nothing. Within the constraints of its limited powers, the Scottish Parliament can take a range of measures to challenge the outrageous inequalities that scar our society.

#### Key anti-poverty policies:

The SSP will:

- Replace the Council Tax with a new income-based Scottish Service Tax which would shift the burden of local taxation onto the highest paid quarter of the population.
- Introduce a £7.32p an hour minimum wage for all Scottish public sector workers, including those under 21.
- Generate an extra 24,000 jobs by introducing a maximum 35 hour week for all Scottish public sector employees.
- Scrap domestic water charges and impose a water levy of 0.5 per cent of turnover on businesses to raise £1 billion. This would allow us to end household charges and to invest in treatment plants without costly pri-

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vate finance schemes. Businesses which are too small to register for VAT, or PAYE would be exempt.

- Abolish the 'son of warrant sales', the new debt recovery system introduced by the executive which perpetuates the same old, discredited debt recovery scheme under a new name.
- Provide special funding to enable to 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.
- Expand the provision of independent locally-based money advice centres.
- Work with local community groups to create functioning credit unions in all local areas where there are significant levels of poverty and low pay.

*DRIVE OUT  
LOW PAY: the  
SSP will fight for  
the Scottish  
parliament to  
use its limited  
powers to  
banish poverty  
from Scotland*



# Action on health

Scotland's atrocious health record is an international disgrace. Life expectancy in our biggest city, Glasgow, lags behind dozens of Third World countries including Albania, Algeria, Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, China, Iran and Libya.



**EVEN PALESTINIAN** men living in the impoverished and dangerous West Bank can expect to live longer than Glaswegian men – despite the fact that Scotland produces 25 times more wealth per head than the West Bank.

Few countries in the developed world can match Scotland's astronomically high death rates from heart disease, respiratory disease and cancer.

Scotland's health problems are the product of a combination of causes including poor nutrition, damp housing, lack of exercise, smoking, alcohol abuse and heroin abuse.

These in turn are closely related to poverty. The poorest regions of Scotland, including Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire and West Lothian have some of the highest rates of premature death in the country.

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.

A long term transformation in Scotland's health will require a revolution in the way people live their lives.

That in turn would mean draining the swamps of poverty and inequality which are the breeding grounds for despair and destructive behaviour.

In the short term, the NHS needs emergency surgery. Waiting lists and waiting times for treatment are longer

today than before the Scottish Parliament was established.

There is a desperate need for more doctors, more nurses, more ancillary staff and more beds. That means more funding, better administration and allocation of resources based on real needs rather than on crude population statistics.

## Key health policies:

### General health

The SSP will:

- Revive the bill to provide nutritious free school meals with milk and water for all state school pupils.
- Set up, in conjunction with local authorities, a network of community-run supermarkets specialising in healthy local produce at the cheapest possible retail prices. These would be piloted initially in those local areas with high levels of poverty, poor diet and low life expectancy.
- Ban the advertising of alcohol in line with the recently introduced ban on tobacco advertising.
- Ban the advertising of junk food.
- Provide free toothpaste and toothbrushes for all children and a dental hygiene campaign in all schools as an alternative to water fluoridation.
- Provide special funding to local authorities to enable them to remove admission charges to fitness facilities, including swimming pools, sports centres and gymnasiums.
- Ensure all children receive a minimum of two hours physical education a week.
- Offer 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.

- Draw up a 'Health of the Nation' document in collaboration with the medical profession, nutritionists, health trades unions and anti-poverty groups setting out a ten year plan to turn Scotland from the sickest nation in Europe to the healthiest.
- Abolish eye test charges.
- Abolish dental check-up charges.
- Provide the 'morning after pill' free of charge in every pharmacy.
- Establish women's health centres providing access to contraception and abortion facilities and cancer screening.
- Provide the legal right of women to receive a triple assessment for breast cancer, including physical examination, ultrasound and mammogram.

#### **The NHS**

The SSP will:

- Replace the NHS Trusts with a new democratically-run Scottish NHS,

*ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF LIFE:: Low paid Glasgow hospital workers strike back*

with administrators accountable to elected boards consisting of medical professionals, other healthcare workers and local communities.

- Reverse all privatisation within the NHS, and cancel all existing PFI and PPP projects in favour of public investment.
- Establish democratic joint planning committees to co-ordinate health and social services. This would involve harmonisation of wages and conditions, with differentials between similar occupations in health and social work levelled upwards to the best existing arrangements.
- Work with GPs to expand primary care services.
- Create a fully-funded 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.
- Set up a free counselling and talking therapy service.
- Allocate NHS spending according to health needs rather than crude population statistics. Previous attempts to achieve this, such as Arbutnott only succeeded in redistributing 1-2 per cent of the overall budget, leaving poorer areas like Glasgow grossly underfunded.
- Increase the bed occupancy rate in the NHS to 85 per cent in line with British Medical Association recommendations.
- Prevent hospital closures, except with

*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.*



Our opposition to PFI and privatisation is based on the principles of democracy, accountability and fairness. The directors of the private companies who are taking over our hospitals and schools are unelected and unaccountable.

And the deal that has been struck with these companies is grossly unfair to the taxpayer. It is especially unfair to our children who will be left a debt millstone totalling billions of pounds.

**Cost of replacing PFI and privatised catering, cleaning and other services:**  
*Over time, these measures will save the taxpayer at least several billion pounds. One moderate estimate suggests that if PFI was replaced by public borrowing, over a 30 year period £240 million would be saved for every £1 billion of PFI investment.*

*With £7 billion of PFI projects already signed, that would mean savings of £56 million a year. Bringing profitable contracts for catering, cleaning and other services into the public sector would raise hundreds of millions more for investment in public services.*

*NO TO WAR: the SSP is committed to opposing war on Iraq and believes that the best way to support our troops is to bring them home*

## 6 Oppose and obstruct any war for oil

The Scottish Parliament did not have the power to stop Scotland being press-ganged into a war against Iraq. But it does have the power to declare its opposition to the mass slaughter of Iraqi children planned by George Bush.

This is not a war of liberation. As the writer John Le Carre recently pointed out, if Saddam didn't have oil, he would be allowed to torture his citizens to his heart's content.

Nor is this a war against terror. The secular regime of Saddam Hussein has always opposed al Qaeda and other movements based on Islamic fundamentalism. Bombing Baghdad to stop al Qaeda is as logical as bombing Milan to sort out the Mafia.

Nor is this a war of self-defence. Most impartial military experts would con-

*This is not a war of liberation. As the writer John Le Carre recently pointed out, if Saddam didn't have oil, he would be allowed to torture his citizens to his heart's content.*

the approval of the local community.

- Suspend the current acute services reviews, which are driven by a desire to cut costs and expand privatisation. In the meantime, consult with communities and NHS staff to work out the most effective distribution of acute services.
- Phase out all private health care and incorporate private medical facilities, services and resources into the NHS.
- Ban consultants from spending – including time on call – on work for the private sector.
- Expand physiotherapy services, which are grossly underfunded.
- Stop the abuse of waiting lists by NHS consultants advancing their private patients up NHS waiting lists.

### **NHS staff**

The SSP will:

- Introduce a £7.32 an hour minimum wage for all NHS staff in line with the European Decency Threshold.
- Give all nurses an immediate 13 per cent pay rise, in line with the pay rise given to MSPs.
- Introduce a maximum 35 hour week for NHS staff to be phased in as part of a general increase in staffing.
- Return all staff employed by private contractors to direct NHS employment on NHS wages and conditions
- Scrap the current 'Agenda for Change' proposals and commission the Labour Research Department to conduct an independent review of all pay scales in the Scottish NHS.
- Restore wages for student nurses.
- Send untrained NHS staff to training courses in nursing and other skills without loss of earnings.
- Allow staff to work genuinely flexible hours.
- End the use of 'bank' staff, a substitute for employing full time staff.
- Introduce a 'zero tolerance policy' to deter violence against health workers.



*GOOD HEALTH: ordinary health workers have been leading the fight to save the NHS*

### **Medicine**

The SSP will:

- Abolish prescription charges.
- Create a publicly owned Scottish pharmaceutical corporation in Scotland which would supply a range of cheap generic medicines for the NHS and work with universities to research new drug treatments.
- Sell generic medicines to third world countries at cost price, to help alleviate suffering from AIDS and other treatable diseases.
- Defy the patents on profitable life saving and life enhancing drugs.
- Concentrate investment on disease-curing medicines rather than on the profitable symptom-control medicines favoured by the private pharmaceutical companies.

### **Mental Health**

The SSP will

- Review the current Mental Health (Scotland) Act, bringing it into line with the European Declaration on Human Rights.
- Include a statutory right of patients to be offered rehabilitation from illness, not just stabilisation with medication and simplistic care in the community.
- Institute new measures to ensure real patient and carer influence from the ground up, in service development.

# Action on transport

In Scotland today, over half the population depend on public transport. Thirty-six per cent of households have no access to a car. In urban areas, the figures are even higher: 46 per cent of households in Edinburgh and over 60 per cent of households in Glasgow have no access to a car.



**LOWER INCOME** households in particular are heavily reliant on public transport, especially buses. In Glasgow's Easterhouse housing scheme, for example – which lies six miles outside the city centre – four out of five households have no access to cars.

Over the past 25 years, the price of motoring has remained constant, allowing for inflation. The price of air travel has plummeted.

In the same period, the price of rail travel has escalated by 60 per cent more than inflation. The mode of transport which most low income families rely on – bus travel – has seen the biggest price increases of all, with fares rising 80 per cent above the inflation rate.

Yet the roads budget consumes over 60 per cent of all public spending on transport in Scotland.

Scotland faces a serious transport crisis in the next few years. As public transport declines, road traffic escalates. Scots do more car mileage per head than almost any other European country, while our mileage on public transport is among the lowest in Europe.

As a result, our cities are grinding to a standstill, our residential streets are becoming more and more dangerous for children and respiratory diseases are on the rampage.

Back in 1999, both Labour and the Liberal Democrats promised to plough resources into public transport. In government, these parties have continued to prioritise spending on new roads, with £800 million committed since 1999.

In contrast, just £235 million has been

committed from the Public Transport Fund in its five spending rounds from 1998-2002. This is less than the cost to the taxpayer of a five mile stretch of elevated motorway, the planned £250 million M74 Northern Extension.

Overall, the Scottish Executive has committed twice as much to new road building as it has to new public transport. As well as discriminating against low income groups who cannot afford to drive cars, this strategy undermines the government's pledge that Scotland play its part in global climate control.

The SSP believes that radical action is necessary to avert this crisis. At the heart of our transport strategy for Scotland would be a far-reaching shift in resources away from roads and towards public transport.

## Key transport policies:

The SSP will:

- Begin the construction of a new Central Scottish Rapid Transit Network, combining heavy and light rail/tramway systems, to be completed within ten years. This would involve 50 new stations, 500 miles of track, and 360 miles of upgraded lines extending to Dundee in the north east and to Ayr in the south west. This would allow passengers to travel between any two destinations in central Scotland within an hour.
- Begin the construction of tram/light rail systems in Scotland's four main cities, with 10 minute services, along the lines of those recently opened in Manchester, Sheffield, the West Midlands and Croydon.

- Reopen the Waverley line between the Borders and Edinburgh. There is huge public support for this scheme and, as things stand, the Borders is the largest area of Britain without any rail service.
- Build a rail link between Newtonmore and Roybridge, ensuring a northern rail link between the East and West coast Highland lines.
- Build a cross rail link connecting Glasgow's northern and southern rail networks.
- Bring back into public ownership Scotrail, which operates 95 per cent of train services in Scotland. Right now, the Scottish Executive pours over £130 million a year into Scotrail, effectively subsidising the profits of its UK parent company, National Express.
- Establish a publicly owned bus group operating fleets of micro-buses linking up local communities with the nearest train/light rail stations.
- Impose a price cap of 10p a mile on all public transport by road and rail. Most fares in Europe are charged per kilometre as opposed to the chaotic, ad hoc system in this country.
- Introduce free rail, bus and ferry travel for all pensioners, schoolchildren, people with disabilities, carers and benefit claimants.
- Scrap plans to build the M74 extension. This will cost taxpayers £250 million and will obliterate local communities, including homes and businesses, across a swathe of Glasgow's southside.
- Review all other new road-building projects, with priority given to road safety improvements and better road maintenance rather than to bigger and faster roads.
- Bring back into public ownership trunk road maintenance.
- Impose special road tolls for heavy goods vehicles to offset the £100 million a year maintenance costs for Scottish roads. These would be based on

*Scotland faces a serious transport crisis in the next few years. As public transport declines, road traffic escalates. Scots do more car mileage per head than almost any other European country, while our mileage on public transport is among the lowest in Europe.*

annual mileage as registered on tacographs. The average juggernaut inflicts 50,000 times the road damage caused by a car.

- Ensure that all money raised by government and local authorities from parking meters and car parks is ring-fenced for public transport.
- Bring in a new system of island ferry pricing, with a 'road-equivalent-tariff' 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.
- Abolish all bridge tolls and bring the Skye Bridge into public ownership.
- Set up and fund strategic passenger transport bodies in all regions of Scotland (eg the Highlands and Islands, South West Scotland, the Borders, Lothians, Central Scotland, North East Scotland etc). These would be elected by and accountable to local authorities and community councils and would have the task of transforming public transport provision at regional level.

*CONVOY:  
Privatisation of  
transport has  
meant chaotic  
bus timetables*



- Provide 20mph zones with traffic calming measures in all residential streets where requested by the local community to cut the unacceptably high child death toll, which disproportionately affects lower income communities.
- Build new, dedicated freight lines to allow more freight to be shifted from road to rail.
- Expand the provision of low-cost park-and-ride schemes to reduce congestion in major towns and city centres.
- Work out a national cycle strategy along with relevant organisations such as Spokes to develop an extensive network of safe, well-maintained and well-lit cycle tracks. The strategy would also provide high quality cycle training for all Primary 6/7 pupils.
- Appoint a dedicated transport minister.
- Set a deadline for all urban bus companies to employ conductors. This would create new jobs, speed up the flow of traffic, create safer working conditions for drivers and improve the convenience for passengers.
- Phase in alternative fuels (eg H fuel cells) for public service vehicles.
- Bring CalMac into democratic public ownership and begin a full review of all ferry services in consultation with island communities.
- Bring Highlands and Islands Airports Limited into democratic public ownership.
- In consultation with affected communities, review the current structure of air transport in the Highlands and Islands to ensure that residents in peripheral areas have reasonable access to low cost air travel.

## Action on education

Education is a natural activity that starts the day we are born and ends the day we die. Scotland has always had a separate education system from the rest of Britain. Today, Scottish education tends to be more broadly based and less elitist than in other parts of the UK



**BUT DECADES** of under-funding of our schools, colleges and universities have left Scottish education trailing way behind much of continental Europe.

For example, the ratio of teachers to pupils in Scottish primary schools is roughly 20 to 1. In Denmark, a country the same size as Scotland, that ratio is just 10 to 1.

Twenty years ago, students received a grant, which would be worth at least £6000 in today's money.

They were also eligible for social security benefits during holidays and could claim housing benefit. Today's genera-

tion of students receive none of these.

As a result, students from working class backgrounds are at a huge disadvantage, forced to work long hours in bars, shops and restaurants to survive while their more affluent classmates can concentrate on their studies.

Since the privatisation of further education, the whole system is increasingly run according to the needs and wishes of business, rather than for the benefit of the wider community. Fifty percent of further education boards of management have to be business people, which has led to rampant nepotism, bullyboy



management and the widespread victimisation of trade unionists.

The social divide that runs through Scotland like an invisible Berlin Wall distorts and corrupts our education system.

In Scotland's capital city, around a quarter of children receive a privileged, private education in schools with ten to a class offering a vast range of activities and facilities. Others are taught in overcrowded classes in dilapidated school buildings with threadbare facilities.

Even within the state sector there is rampant inequality. The school exam league tables bear a remarkable resemblance to the Premier football league tables, with the wealthy at the top and the poor at the bottom.

Inequality in education will always exist while we live in a socially divided society. The Scottish Parliament does not have the power to turn around social inequality. But it does have the power to introduce trail-blazing policies which could lift Scottish education to the heights of the best in Europe.

### Key education policies:

#### *Higher and further education*

The SSP will:

- Reinstatement of student grants as a first step towards ending student poverty.
- Completely abolish all fees in the higher and further education sectors.
- Reverse all privatisation and part-privatisation of colleges and universities.
- Scrap the undemocratic boards of management in further education. Replace them with elected boards comprising representatives of teaching unions, ancillary staff, students and local councils.
- Unify all colleges into a co-operative network of institutions working together rather than competing against one another, under local democratic control.
- Provide rent-free accommodation for those students who need it.

*In Scotland's capital city, around a quarter of children receive a privileged, private education in schools with ten to a class offering a vast range of activities and facilities. Others are taught in overcrowded classes in dilapidated school buildings with threadbare facilities.*

#### **Nursery, primary and secondary education**

The SSP will:

- Recruit and train the extra teachers needed to achieve maximum class sizes of 20 and maximum practical class sizes of 16 in all Scottish schools within five years.
- End the publication of school league tables, which tend to be a measure of affluence and poverty rather than performance.
- Replace the existing school boards with new school councils, which would include teachers and other educational workers, parents and school students.
- Replace the nursery voucher scheme with free, publicly funded pre-school education for all three and four year olds.
- Invest in good quality kindergarten care for babies and toddlers up to the age of three.
- Provide free, publicly-funded after-school care for all 5-12 year olds who require it.

#### **Schools**

The SSP will:

- Terminate all PPP and PFI projects and return to the principle that education facilities be publicly funded.
- Oppose school closures except with the agreement of the local community.
- Open schools and their facilities free of charge for adult education and other cultural and sporting activities in the evenings, at weekends and during holidays.

*Since the privatisation of further education the whole system is increasingly run according to the needs and wishes of business, rather than for the benefit of the wider community.*

- Move towards a fully comprehensive system by abolishing streaming and selection and by integrating private schools into the public sector.
- Encourage diversity and experimentation with different educational methods incorporated into teacher training programmes. This would aim to provide a much greater emphasis on thinking skills and creativity.
- Drastically reduce the pressures of internal assessment in national qualifications, to allow more time and space for teaching and learning.
- Work towards democratic and egalitarian restructuring of schools, with plenary staff decision-making and flattened pay scales.
- Work towards maximising participation in decision-making by pupils, so as to embed the practice of democratic principles at the earliest age.
- Establish 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.
- Ensure that bilingual education is available for children from ethnic minorities.
- Ensure that Gaelic is available for all school students who wish to learn the language.
- Promote Scots, with all its diverse dialects, as one of the main languages of Scotland.
- Provide nutritious free school meals with milk and water for all primary and secondary pupils and end the private sponsorship of school meals.
- Create a desegregated education system that allows for the rights of reli-

gious observance by all denominations. This would be implemented by consent and agreement rather than by compulsion and enforcement.

### **Specialised education**

The SSP will:

- Integrate the children of asylum seekers into mainstream education, backed up by specialist language teachers.
- Expand special needs education in line with the rising incidences of autistic spectrum disorders. At the same time, we will provide the staffing, resources and facilities to make it easier for children with special needs to integrate into mainstream education.

### **Educational staff**

The SSP will:

- Fully fund the McCrone deal on teachers' pay and conditions.
- Introduce a £7.32 an hour minimum wage for all education workers, including dining hall staff, cleaners and school crossing wardens.

*SCOTLAND'S  
FUTURE: The  
SSP wants to  
invest heavily in  
education*



# Action on housing

If the daily media hype is to be believed, we are in the midst of an unprecedented housing boom. Almost every day, new figures show house prices scaling new heights.



**FOR MANY** owner-occupiers, the monthly rise in the value of their homes is higher than their monthly salary.

But this is a superficial bonanza, which has the potential to turn into a social catastrophe. Even now, many workers on low-to-medium salaries are excluded from buying their own home.

During the recent FBU dispute, numerous tales emerged of firefighters unable to afford housing in the cities where they work, and consequently forced to commute long distances. The same pattern exists among health workers, teachers and other essential occupations.

In the past, many of these workers would have had access to high quality public sector housing at affordable rents. But for the past 20 years public housing has been under the cosh.

Housing subsidies to councils were slashed to ribbons. Rents were driven up. Council house building came to a standstill. At the same time, the government's 'right to buy' policy forced councils to sell off their best stock at bargain basement prices.

Now, the Lab-Lib government in Holyrood is forging ahead with its plan to abolish council housing through large-scale stock transfer to the semi-private sector.

Meanwhile, homelessness has emerged as one of the most serious social problems of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Every night, hundreds of people sleep rough in Scotland's cities. Every year, 80,000 families and individuals across

Scotland register as homeless. Hundreds of thousands more live in unsuitable housing, much of it unfit for human habitation.

The SSP stands for the revival of high quality council housing at low rents. The pre-war Scottish labour movement tackled the slum-housing crisis by building elegant tree-lined council estates such as Mosspark and Knightswood, which are still in high demand.

Today we live in a far wealthier society. There is no excuse for tolerating homelessness, or damp ramshackle housing, or sky-high rents.

## Key housing policies:

The SSP will:

- Cancel Scotland's local authority housing debt with no strings attached.
- Allow local authorities to use the money released from debt cancellation to revolutionise public sector housing by building and renovating 50,000 new homes within four years.
- Establish a new minimum housing standard in both the public and private rented sectors, with central heating, double-glazing and Scandinavian standards of insulation in every home.
- Replace 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.
- End all wholesale housing stock transfers and halt those already underway.

- Create more social housing for rent by introducing legislation compelling construction companies to build one new home for rent for every ten 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. This would provide several thousand brand new homes for rent each year.
- Guarantee the right of all tenants, including new tenants and those in the private sector, to secure tenancies in line with the new Scottish secure tenancy agreement.
- Introduce 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.
- Establish council tenant forums with real powers at neighbourhood and

*SKY HIGH:*  
Scotland's  
council rents  
soar while the  
housing stock  
decays

city-wide level along with similar forums for housing association tenants and for those in the private rented sector.

- Allocate each tenant forum £5 for every house that they represent. This will generate at least £4-5million for the re-establishment of the tenant movement in Scotland.
- Involve council and housing association tenants in all strategic planning decisions.
- Provide whatever resources are necessary to homeless organisations to end rough sleeping.
- Fund safe housing for women who have suffered domestic violence.
- Establish a national conveyancy agency to allow greater regulation of the housing market. The agency would oblige sellers to provide a nationally approved survey to all potential buyers.



# Action on the fire service

The SSP has fought alongside firefighters and emergency control staff in pursuit of professional pay and in defence of the service against attacks by the Westminster government and employers.



**THE GOVERNMENT** has binned the 2002 Pathfinder Review which prioritised the protection of lives rather than just the protection of property.

This review calculated that a doubling of investment and doubling of the workforce is required to provide an adequate, modern service.

In contrast the ill-prepared Bain Report has been used as a vehicle to demand 150 station closures; 5,000 job losses; attacks on the firefighters' Final Salary Pension Scheme; the re-imposition of overtime; cuts to fire appliances and cuts to fire cover during the hours of darkness, when 75 percent of all fire deaths occur.

To their eternal shame, the Scottish Executive attempted to rush through the abolition of Section 19 of the Fire Service Act. This would have allowed fire stations to be closed without consultation with local communities or with the FBU.

## Key fire service policies:

The SSP will:

- Retain Section 19 of the Fire Service Act – which insists on public consultation over measures such as station closures – and demand the Scottish parliament defy its abolition by Westminster.
- Call on the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Fire Boards to oppose and obstruct the implementation of station closures, job losses and cuts to fire cover and fire appliances.
- Oppose and obstruct any moves by the Westminster government to ban the right to strike for firefighters.

*STATE OF EMERGENCY: The SSP will oppose New Labour plans to turn striking firefighters into criminals*

- Pressurise the Scottish Parliament to set aside £43 million to meet in full Scotland's share of the FBU's claim for professional pay for firefighters and control staff. We do not propose this as a separate Scottish settlement, but as a challenge to Westminster to match the Scottish parliament's commitment to a well-funded fire service with a properly-paid, highly-motivated workforce.



# Action on democracy

The Scottish Socialist Party offers a vision of socialism which is egalitarian, libertarian and democratic. Socialism is not just about redistribution of wealth. It is also about redistribution of power.



**A 50-YEAR-OLD** Scot will have had the opportunity to vote in just ten Westminster general elections and one Scottish parliament election during their entire lifetime.

More often than not, the vote they cast will have been immaterial to the outcome of the election. Especially under the first-past-the-post Westminster system, most votes don't count for anything, because most people live in non-marginal seats.

In any case, politicians do not make many of the biggest decisions. They are made by unelected company directors, or by unelected quango bosses, or by unelected Law Lords, or by unelected bankers, or by unelected military generals.

Although Westminster was eventually allowed a vote on whether to go to war, this was purely consultative. The decision was made by Tony Blair alone

In Britain, even though we live in the 21st century, elements of feudalism still persist. Every MP and MSP has to swear allegiance to a hereditary monarch. Westminster legislation is subject to approval by a gaggle of aristocrats most of whom owe their power to their medieval ancestors.

After the decades of Tory centralism, the establishment of a Scottish Parliament marked a significant step forward. The partially proportional electoral system marks an important advance from the discredited first-past-the-post system, though it still falls far short of delivering genuine proportional representation.

Similarly, the committee system, which allows interest groups to present evidence to MSPs, allows for greater involvement than the closed institutions of Westminster. On top of that, decisions affecting a range of Scottish affairs now have to be debated out in public, under the media spotlight.

On the other hand, the Scottish Parliament is forced to operate within narrow parameters, with most of the big decision-making reserved to Westminster. In a separate section of this manifesto, we explain why the SSP stands for an independent Scottish Parliament.

At the same time, the SSP will fight for sweeping changes to make Scottish government – at national and local level – fully democratic, fully accountable and fully transparent.

## Key pro-democracy policies

The SSP will:

- Back the introduction of PR for all elections, including local council elections.
- Support an independence referendum, allowing the people of Scotland to decide whether our parliament should remain subordinate to Westminster or should be given full power over the economy, defence, employment law, foreign policy and welfare.
- Oppose any move to introduce a House of Lords style unelected second chamber to scrutinise Holyrood legislation.
- Reduce the voting age to 16. It is an absurd anomaly that young people who are old enough to marry, old

enough to pay taxes and old enough to be sent to their deaths in Iraq are deemed too young to vote.

- Extend the right to vote to people who are homeless and to those who are in prison.
- Move towards a system of local participatory 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.

- Challenge the Scottish Parliament to end the ceremony whereby elected MSPs are forced to swear an oath of allegiance to an unelected monarch.

## Action on the environment

The Scottish Socialist Party will fight for the right of the people of Scotland to live in a safe, clean and pleasant environment.



**DESPITE SCOTLAND'S** sparse population and its vast tracts of natural wilderness, most Scots live in a dangerous, dirty and polluted environment.

Most of Europe's nuclear arsenal is located in Scotland. Our rivers and seas are contaminated with poisonous metals and radioactive materials. Depleted uranium is regularly tested on our land and seas.

As traffic chokes our cities, the air we breathe is laden with noxious dust. Asthma among children has reached epidemic proportions. Many of our buildings are stuffed full of killer asbestos.

Some of our communities have toxic dumps on their doorsteps. Potentially dangerous mobile phone masts proliferate in our towns and cities.

Parts of our countryside have been turned into nuclear waste bins. Other parts have been turned into testing grounds for genetically-modified crops, whose spores threaten widespread contamination of our agricultural produce.

As a legacy of its industrial past, Scotland has massive contamination of its land. No-one knows exactly what land is

contaminated or the nature of the contamination.

What we do know is that contaminated land causes serious health problems, including various cancers and birth defects.

These are local problems. But they are part of a global crisis, which poses a grave and growing threat to the entire planetary eco-system, upon which all life depends.

We recognise that a small country like Scotland cannot quarantine itself from the rest of the world. Climate change and the wholesale rape of the world's natural environment by transnational capitalism cannot be halted or reversed on a national basis.

Ultimately, the future of humankind can only be safeguarded by international co-operation and by the peoples of the planet standing up to the corporate vandals.

Nonetheless, the Scottish Parliament can take important steps in the direction of a clean, green Scotland, which in turn would set an example to the rest of the UK, Europe and the world.

*Most of Europe's nuclear arsenal is located in Scotland. Our rivers and seas are contaminated with poisonous metals and radioactive materials. Depleted uranium is regularly tested on our land and seas.*

#### **Key environmental policies:**

The SSP will:

- Prohibit the transportation of nuclear materials on Scotland's roads and railways.
- Undertake an audit of all contaminated land to identify land that may pose a potential health hazard.
- Embark on a clean-up programme of all contaminated land.
- Tighten up planning regulation and pollution laws to prevent further land contamination. We will base planning regulations on the Precautionary Principle: unless no risk of harm can be shown, then development does not take place.
- Identify, close down and make safe all toxic waste dumps and landfill sites.
- Force all suppliers of goods to the public sector to use degradable and recyclable packaging.
- Transform the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency into a democratically elected and publicly accountable body with no corporate links.
- Provide the new environmental protection agency with with the power to prosecute polluters and to educate the public about environmental issues.
- Ban the dumping of nuclear fuels, chemical pollutants, explosives and armaments on our land and in our waterways.
- Remove hazardous substances, including asbestos from all buildings.
- Introduce a fast-track compensation system for victims of asbestos related diseases.
- Compel all businesses, local authorities and public bodies – including the MOD – to provide full and immediate disclosure of any accident likely to pollute the environment or endanger the health of the population.
- Begin an immediate clean-up programme of Beaufort's Dyke, the munitions dump off the south west coast of Scotland.
- Impose a five-year ban on GM crops to allow further research to take place.
- Establish democratically elected bodies at local, regional and national level to monitor, report and enforce pollution controls.
- Force all businesses and government agencies to clean up demolition sites.
- Introduce new pollution controls on businesses to reduce harmful emissions.
- Reduce household fuel consumption by installing double-glazing and full thermal insulation in all public sector housing.
- Work with environmental groups to develop a five-year programme to supply all public buildings and public sector homes with solar, wind and wave-powered energy.
- Reduce urban traffic by extending pedestrianisation of town and city centres and halting all development of out-of-town shopping malls.
- Explore ways of persuading or forcing out-of-town retail businesses to provide a free delivery service.
- Give local communities the right to veto mobile masts and other potentially dangerous developments in residential areas.
- Refuse permission for any new incinerators.
- Introduce a conservation scheme to protect wildlife habitats and parkland from industrial development.
- Refuse to do business with any company with a proven record of desecrating the environment.
- Ensure that environmental education is incorporated into the curriculum of



- all primary and secondary schools.
- Work out a clear 'climate change target' for Scotland, broken down by sector, to ensure that Scotland plays its full part in the international drive against global warming.
  - Introduce new building regulations, which would force construction companies to use renewable energy sources on new build projects.
  - Expand the provision of recycling bins, to ensure they are visible and accessible in every community and to implement kerbside collection at every household.
  - Introduce legislation ensuring all new

*GRANGEMOUTH SKYLINE:  
The SSP will ensure Scotland plays its part in curbing global warming*

- homes are designed to include a recycling storage cupboard to house two receptacles for uplift by recycling agencies. Where possible all new homes will be provided with home composting facilities.
- Remove the market element from recycling, encouraging community and voluntary groups to set up their own recycling projects. This would be both cost and environmentally effective and would substantially reduce the amount of domestic waste going into landfill.
  - Appoint a dedicated environment minister.



## Action on racism

Racism has no place in our society. The idea that people can be judged by the colour of their skin or their cultural background is abhorrent.



**YET RACIST** attacks continue, both verbal and physical. Many people belonging to ethnic minorities live in fear of the wider community.

This is hardly surprising when the government persists in spreading lies and making inflammatory statements concerning asylum seekers.

Sections of the media consciously whip up racist hysteria and actively promote racism.

This affects not just asylum seekers, but also many people from ethnic minority backgrounds whose families have lived in Scotland for generations.

The SSP has actively worked to expolde the myth that refugees pose a threat to our prosperity or our safety.

We believe that people fleeing poverty and persecution should be welcomed. We all benefit from the skills and cultural diversity that immigrants bring to Scotland.

Many SSP policies will work to undermine the poverty that allows racism to thrive; yet specific action on racism itself is also necessary.

### Key anti-racist policies

The SSP will:

- Incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN declaration on racism into Scots Law.
- Provide secure tenancies to all asylum seekers in public rented accommodation.
- Set up a hardship fund for immigrants who are denied access to legal aid, housing benefit and social security benefits under the 12-month rule

(soon to be extended to 24 months).

- Close down Dungavel Detention Centre and provide housing for those asylum seekers now incarcerated there.
- Assemble and fund a nationwide anti-racist roadshow to go into schools and community centres in every corner of Scotland. This would aim to involve well known actors, footballers and musicians in an ongoing project designed to ridicule racism
- Refuse the use of any public facilities to known racist organisations such as the British National Party and the National Front.
- Work with organisations such as Positive Action in Housing and the Scottish Refugee Council to develop an agreed policy for the housing of asylum seekers.
- Ensure that all public information is provided in the main languages of Scotland's ethnic minority communities.

*ALTOGETHER NOW: The SSP has been at the forefront of challenging racism in our communities*



# Action against sectarianism

Sectarianism is a cancer in Scottish society.



**IT HAS** divided our people, caused misery, violence and death and stained Scotland's reputation abroad.

At the same time, we recognise that it is not always a straightforward matter to define sectarianism.

In the West of Scotland, there are strong links with both sides of the political-religious divide in Northern Ireland.

The Scottish Socialist Party accepts that everyone has the right to express their political views and to celebrate their culture and traditions – providing these activities do not cross over into religious hatred and bigotry.

While we will not necessarily agree on every detail of exactly how to tackle sectarianism, we will work with other political parties, churches, football clubs and campaigns to help eradicate this scourge.

*The Scottish Socialist Party accepts that everyone has the right to express their political views and to celebrate their culture and traditions – providing these activities do not cross over into religious hatred and bigotry.*

**TACKLING SECTARIANISM:**  
*The SSP will work with Scotland's football clubs to help stamp out religious bigotry*

## Key anti-sectarian policies:

The SSP will:

- Support the introduction of a Single Equality Bill bringing together measures that will challenge discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, dependents and religious beliefs.
- Promote an anti-sectarian programme of education for use in our schools.
- Research and monitor the incidence of sectarianism and discrimination in the workplace.
- Support the introduction of special measures to combat workplace sectarianism including monitoring, training and, where necessary, legislation to prevent and punish religious discrimination.
- Urge the main sporting authorities and football clubs to adopt a clear and open anti-sectarian policy with measurable targets.
- Back the main recommendations of the Scottish Parliament's cross party working group on sectarianism.
- Provide practical support to the campaigning activity of Nil By Mouth to ensure that the problem of sectarianism is not swept under the carpet.



# Action on women's rights

In 21st century Scotland, where women have supposedly already achieved equal rights to men, women are still paid on average 20 per cent less than men.



**WOMEN STILL** take on the majority of household chores, and do the majority of care work for children or elderly relatives. Equality is still a long way off.

On top of this, women face an increased threat of violence. An estimated one in five women experience violence from an intimate male partner. Between one in five and one in seven women have been the victim of rape.

Sexism is sustained by the mass media, which continues to reduce women to the level of sexual objects.

The SSP is striving to build a society where discrimination against women has no place, where women have full social, economic and political equality.

The SSP recognises the double oppression women face under capitalism.

Despite the introduction of the Equal Pay Act in 1973, female earnings are still only 72 per cent of male earnings.

Women workers with children are also burdened with extortionate childcare costs averaging £150 per week in Scotland.

The SSP supports the principle of gender equality and – alone among Scotland's political parties – has agreed a built-in mechanism to ensure that women and men each make up half of our candidates for list seats.

## Key women's rights policies

The SSP will:

- Improve the pay of tens of thousands of women workers by introducing a £7.32 minimum wage across the public sector.
- Establish a minimum 12 months

maternity leave, on full pay for public sector workers, with the right to return part time if requested.

- Provide free, publicly funded nursery places for all pre-school children.
- Establish and fund after-school, week-end and holiday clubs in every locality for school age children.
- Provide full funding to services which support women who have suffered violence, abuse, rape and child sexual abuse. This would include the expansion of safe accommodation, helplines and drop-in centres.
- Make the 'morning after pill' available free of charge via NHS outlets, pharmacists and women's centres.
- Provide free sanitary protection for all women.
- Expand the provision of women's refuges and safe housing that meets the needs of women and their dependants.
- Provide equal access for all women to abortion services regardless of where they live in Scotland.
- Support all steps towards equal representation for women at all levels of government.

*We are striving to build a society where discrimination against women has no place, where women have full social, economic and political equality. The SSP supports the principle of gender equality and has agreed a built-in mechanism to ensure that women and men each make up half of our candidates for list seats.*

# Action on youth rights

Young people face the brunt of the exploitation that flourishes in modern Scotland.



**BEFORE THEY** are 18, no minimum wage is provided. They then have to wait a further three years before they are covered by the full minimum wage.

The work young people are offered is usually mundane with long hours and low pay.

At the same time, Scotland's mainstream parties tend to use young people as scapegoats for society's ills.

Not all young people engage in vandalism, street crime, drug abuse and anti-social behaviour.

The SSP rejects crude generalisations that tar all young people with the same brush. We will give Scotland's youth the respect and opportunities they have a right to.

Many of the general policies in this manifesto will benefit young people. But the SSP will also address some of the specific problems young people face.

## Key youth policies

The SSP will:

- Introduce a £7.32 minimum wage for all workers in the public sector, including 16-21 year old workers and trainees.
- Provide young people leaving school for college and university with a student grant while abolishing all student fees.
- Fund 5000 new apprenticeships in construction-related trades as part of a general strategy to build homes, schools, community facilities and hospitals.
- Organise community youth forums across Scotland to identify what

amenities are needed in each local area.

- Fund the setting up of local youth facilities in every community, run democratically by young people.
- Provide free access to all publicly owned cultural and recreational centres including sports centres, arts galleries and museums.
- Introduce free rail, bus and ferry travel for school students and benefit claimants.
- Extend the right to vote and stand for office to all 16 and 17 year olds.
- Set up a union for school students that would give support and representation to those who face bullying, harassment and discrimination. The union would also represent students on new democratic school boards.

*CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION: The new generation of Scots show that apathy that no longer rules*



## Action on elderly rights

The SSP will continue to fight against the unjust treatment of older people.



**WE'VE WITNESSED** successive Tory and New Labour governments running down the living standards of older people, making Scottish pensioners some of the poorest in Western Europe.

It's time to say enough is enough and start treating older people with the respect they deserve.

The SSP is campaigning for Senior Citizens Charter to give back dignity in retirement and put pensioners before profit.

The charter demands the restoration of the link between earnings and pensions, and an immediate increase to compensate for the loss in value of the

state pension since 1979. It also calls for the retirement age to be reduced to 60.

### Key policies on age discrimination

The SSP will:

- Abolish rents for all pensioners in public rented accommodation including sheltered housing.
- Purchase vouchers to provide free fuel for pensioners between October and April, and pressureise telecommunications and power companies to abolish standing charges for pensioners.
- Purchase TV licenses for all pensioners.
- Provide free travel for pensioners on public transport throughout Scotland.

## Action on disabled rights

Disabled people are systematically excluded from the mainstream of Scottish society.



**SIXTY EIGHT** per cent of households with a disabled person have an income of less than £10,000 per year (£200 a week). Disabled people are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to be out of work.

There are 110,000 Scottish households with a disabled person living in it which require adaptations.

The SSP seeks to create a society in which disabled people can play a full and active role in all areas of life in Scotland.

### Key disability policies

The SSP will:

- Replace the Disability Discrimination Act with fully comprehensive, enforceable civil rights legislation as demanded by the disabled people's movement. Such rights will include: access to information in appropriate formats; fair treatment at work; equal access to goods, facilities and services.
- Create a public body to provide full support and assistance to those apply-

*Sixty eight per cent of households with a disabled person have an income of less than £10,000 per year (£200 a week). Disabled people are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to be out of work. There are 110,000 Scottish households with a disabled person living in it which they said required adaptations.*

ing or being reassessed for disability living allowance and incapacity benefit.

- Provide full funding for community care.
- Increase support for those who care for family or friends with disabilities, including education, respite and counselling services.
- Enforce comprehensive standards of accessibility on all public transport.
- Adapt housing to meet the needs of disabled occupants where requested.
- Ensure that all new public housing and buildings are barrier-free.
- Convert existing public buildings to ensure access for disabled people.
- Legislate to recognise British Sign Language as an official language of Scotland.
- Ensure adequate funding to the Direct Payment Scheme and other schemes, which exist to ensure that disabled people receive the assistance necessary to allow them to live fulfilling independent lives in the community.
- Increase resources to promote and provide training in relevant skills, such as British Sign Language, for assistants, public sector workers, education employees and others.
- Reduce waiting lists for Community Care Assessments, rehabilitation and occupational therapy services.
- Provide disabled people with free access to disability-related services, aids and assistive technology.
- Support workers with disabilities, or

*FIGHTING BACK: disabled people are becoming increasingly active in fighting for their rights*

who become disabled while in employment, to enable them to continue in employment should they wish to do so.

- Develop a national policy on disability at work, using some existing excellent policies and the Access to Work Scheme as templates.
- Sanction all disabled parking bays, whether on public or private ground, by imposing fines for misuse by non-disabled badge holders. These fines will contribute towards disability support services.
- Consult with disabled persons and their carers on the provision and location of more disabled parking bays close to shops, cinemas, hospitals and other facilities.



## Action on gay rights

The SSP is striving to build a tolerant socialist society in which anti-gay bigotry has no place.



**WE ENVISAGE** a society in which diversity is strength and where each individual's contribution is valued.

The SSP was among those organisations which stood up against the hysterical tabloid media campaign to keep Section 2A (Section 28 in England and Wales).

The powers of the Scottish Parliament are limited. For example, it cannot legislate to provide full employment rights or pension rights.

But it can use the powers it does have to tear down some of the barriers that prevent gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people playing an equal part in society.

### Key gay rights policies

The SSP will:

- Promote equal rights for gay and lesbian couples in parenting, fostering and adoption.
- Support the principle of a Civil Registered Partnership, which would be open to same-sex partners and would give the same status to people living together as married couples.
- Support and fund initiatives in schools and colleges aimed at eradicating homophobic bullying and isolation.
- Support and fund community projects such as the Glasgow LGBT Centre and develop similar facilities in other towns and cities.

## Action on crime and justice

Scotland's working class communities bear the brunt of most crime that is committed in Scotland.



**AS A** general rule, people living in the poorest areas suffer a disproportionate share of street violence, domestic violence, housebreaking, car theft, mugging, vandalism and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

As a party which draws most of its support from working class communities, the Scottish Socialist Party stands for radical action to reduce crime. But that means first and foremost tackling

the roots of crime, which include alcohol abuse, hard drug addiction and poverty.

Most crimes of street violence are associated with drunkenness. Many serious assaults and murders are linked to racism, sectarianism and homophobia. One woman a month is killed in Scotland by her partner or ex-partner.

A significant proportion of criminal activity, especially acts of theft such as



burglary, muggings, shoplifting are carried out by Scotland's growing army of young heroin addicts, desperate to feed their habit.

Other crimes such as car theft, vandalism and gang-fighting could be reduced by providing attractive amenities for young people such as clubs, drop-in centres and sports centres.

Many people living in crime-scarred communities have little confidence in the police or the legal system. There is a general perception, grounded in reality, that the police and judiciary are heavily biased in favour of the rich and powerful.

Vast resources are deployed to counter legitimate political protests, including anti-nuclear demos at Faslane and community protests such as the campaign to save Govanhill Swimming Pool in Glasgow.

Huge policing operations have been mounted at these events, mass arrests have taken place and protracted expensive trials have resulted in scores of criminal convictions.

In contrast, the family of Surjit Singh Chhokar are still seeking justice for his murder following a series of blunders by the Crown Office. The family of murdered Glasgow barman, Chris McGreal have faced a similar predicament.

While known murderers walk the streets, innocent people spend decades in jail for crimes they did not commit. The Miscarriages of Justice Organisation (MOJO) has exposed a number of such cases, yet invariably runs into a brick wall erected by the Scottish legal establishment.

The setting up of the Scottish Parliament has allowed greater scrutiny and accountability of Scotland's legal system. But while the mainstream parties are zealous in their calls to 'modernise' the fire service or the NHS they lack the political courage to call for the modernisation of a legal system which has

remained pickled in preservatives for centuries.

### Key crime and justice policies:

#### *Crime reduction*

The SSP will:

- Provide heroin free on prescription to all registered addicts via the NHS as part of an integrated drug strategy. This would significantly reduce the prime motive for petty crime, while undermining the lucrative criminal empires which have been built on the supply of heroin.
- Instruct Scotland's eight local police forces to halt all arrests of anyone caught in possession of cannabis for personal use; and to allow an agreed number of Dutch-style cannabis coffee shops to be permitted to function in each region. This would allow police time to be more effectively used, and would begin the process of separating the use of cannabis from more dangerous drugs like heroin.
- Instruct police officers to disregard the use of cannabis, which devours a vast amount of police time, money and personnel.
- Expand alcohol rehabilitation detox and abstinence facilities backed up by a high profile media/education campaign to challenge Scotland's 'binge-drinking' culture.
- Organise community youth forums across Scotland to identify what amenities are needed in each local area.
- Fund the setting up of local youth facilities in every community, run by young people.
- Undertake a program of education, prevention and treatment to challenge the culture of bullying and violence against women and children.
- Introduce a Scottish-wide strategy to reduce domestic violence. This would include domestic violence courts, domestic violence awareness training for public sector workers, and manda-

tory and voluntary perpetrator programmes.

### **The police and judiciary**

The SSP will:

- Replace the toothless Joint Police Boards with new community boards at a local, regional and national level. These would hold the police to account and would include elected councillors, MSPs and directly elected community representatives.
- Set up an independent police complaints authority.
- Make public all information on the surveillance of political activists in Scotland.
- Move towards a system of accountability over judges and sheriffs that would allow them to be removed from their posts if they have lost the confidence of the general public. This would be done in consultation with the Law Society of Scotland, the Scottish Human Rights-Centre and Victim Support Scotland.

*The setting up of the Scottish Parliament has allowed greater scrutiny and accountability of Scotland's legal system. But while the mainstream parties are zealous in their calls to 'modernise' the fire service or the NHS they lack the political courage to call for the modernisation of a legal system which has remained pickled in preservatives for centuries*

*NO VICTIM  
NO CRIME:  
Vast resources  
are devoted to  
hounding young  
people for using  
a relatively  
harmless drug  
while the heroin  
godfathers  
make a killing*

### **Civil rights**

The SSP will:

- Restore recent cutbacks in Legal Aid and extend it to cover workplace and consumer disputes.
- Support the setting up of law centres in all communities.
- Launch an independent inquiry into the handling of the Surjit Singh Chhokar murder case.



- End the suspension of the 110-day rule to ensure anyone held in custody cannot be held indefinitely.
- Establish a Scottish Human Rights Court in place of the Privy Council, which is a relic of the British Empire, staffed by Law Lords and based in London.
- Scrap the Criminal Justice Act 1996 that has been used against GM crop demonstrators and others engaged in peaceful protest.
- Introduce a new fast track appeals system to deal with suspected miscarriages of justice.

### Prisons

The SSP will:

- Oppose privatisation and PFI in the prison service and bring Kilmarnock Prison into public ownership.
- Cut down Scotland's prison population – already the highest in Western Europe pro-rata to the population – by

expanding alternatives to custody for offenders. This would apply to those who can be supported and/or rehabilitated in the community and especially to those who have been imprisoned for non-payment of fines.

- Expand prison rehabilitation programmes. This would include suitable treatment for alcohol and drug abuse as well as psychological and psychiatric support

### The law

The SSP will:

- Resist all Westminster interference in devolved matters.
- Campaign for the Scottish Parliament to have the right to set its own laws on asylum rights, drugs, anti-terrorism and media regulation.
- Allow jury trials on demand for cases involving compensation claims against employers - for example by victims of asbestos-related disease.

## Action on jobs

According to most economists, the world economy is sliding into recession. For Scotland, with its heavy reliance on inward investment by multinationals and its overdependence on export-orientated industries, the prospects are especially grim.

**AFTER A** decade of worldwide economic growth, unemployment in Scotland has fallen to its lowest level since the 1970s. But a serious downturn in the world economy would mean a new blizzard of redundancies throughout industry.

The result will be falling tax revenues, rising social security bills and an all-out onslaught on the public sector as the Westminster government tries to balance the books.

Multinational corporations have

abused inward investment incentives. A long list of corporate pirates have grabbed government grants, built up vast profits then abandoned Scottish communities to exploit cheaper labour elsewhere.

In a profit-driven system, the economy is largely run from the boardrooms and stock exchanges, by faceless fatcats who are unelected and unaccountable.

Those powers are largely reserved to Westminster. The Scottish Parliament has little control over the private sector.



It has no powers over trade union laws, over company taxation, or over employment legislation.

Nonetheless a team of Scottish Socialist MSPs will fight to ensure that Holyrood stands up for the people of Scotland against big business and Westminster.

#### Key employment policies:

The SSP will:

- Create 24,000 jobs by legislating for a 35-hour maximum working week in the Scottish public sector.
- Fund the training of 5000 new apprenticeships in construction-related trades as part of a general strategy to build public sector homes, schools, community facilities and hospitals.
- Refuse contracts to any company which is anti-trade union.
- Take over the assets, including factories, offices and equipment – without compensation – of multinational companies which pull out of Scotland in search of cheaper labour elsewhere; and impose heavy financial penalties on those companies.

*Multinational corporations have abused inward investment incentives. A long list of corporate pirates have grabbed government grants, built up vast profits then abandoned Scottish communities to exploit cheaper labour elsewhere.*

*UNION STREET: More and more and more workers are calling for their trade unions to break with New Labour*

- Support trade unionists forced to take strike action in defence of their living standards and working conditions.
- Ensure that all public sector trainees are paid trade union negotiated rates of pay.
- Regenerate local economies by returning the business rates to the control of local authorities.
- Investigate a more progressive form of local business taxation to transfer the burden of business rates away from small businesses and new businesses onto bigger and more profitable businesses.
- Set up 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.



# Action on rural decline

Even though Scotland has benefited from a favourable economic climate over the past decade, prosperity has bypassed most people in the countryside.



**THE BORDERS**, South West Scotland and large areas of the Highlands and Islands are trapped on a treadmill of depopulation, poverty and stagnation.

We reject the fraudulent claim by the Countryside Alliance that it represents the interests of the entire rural population, from low paid agricultural workers to big landowners.

The SSP believes that big landowners bear a large part of the blame for the crisis in the countryside.

Scotland has by far the most unequal land distribution in Europe. Eighty per cent of our land area, our hills, glens, farmland and forests, is owned by 0.02 per cent of the population.

Half our country is owned by just 600 people. The Highlands in particular has suffered at the hands of the absentee owners.

For the wealthy – even the moderately wealthy and professional middle class – with their large houses, holiday homes, four-wheel-drives and leisure pursuits, the countryside remains a playground.

But for most of Scotland's rural population, the reality is starkly different. An ageing population, an economy built on low pay, lack of housing, geographical isolation and a dearth of facilities means that rural life has nothing in common with the idyllic images portrayed in TV dramas.

It is not unusual to walk along a High Street today and find no fresh vegetables, fruit, flowers, fish or meat – and soon no Post Office.

Shops and industrial units lie empty everywhere. In the bigger towns, it's the

same chain stores that predominate.

With every generation there is haemorrhaging of young people to the cities of the Central Belt, or to London, or abroad. Those who stay find themselves drowning in a reservoir of low pay, under-employment and deprivation.

Call centres and other anti-union IT firms, hailed as the salvation of rural employment, arrive in a blaze of publicity only to vanish quietly having first grabbed their share of enterprise grants.

Transport is a particularly vital issue for those living in rural areas. One in three rural homes have no access to a car. In many areas the only public transport is the twice-daily school bus.

Rural Scotland also faces a serious housing shortage. Especially in scenic areas, house prices tend to be sky-high and council waiting lists can be decades long.

As holiday homes proliferate, young local couples are forced to move out, accelerating the downward spiral of depopulation and economic stagnation.

Over the last 30 years, the number of Scottish farmholdings has fallen by an average of three per week. Farm employment has fallen even faster.

Meanwhile the big six supermarkets – Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Safeway and Somerfield – control approximately 84 per cent of UK grocery sales, a huge market worth £90 billion per year.

They wield enormous and growing economic and political power. Their buying power is not reflected in prices to the consumer, but in enormous profits.

The SSP seeks to bring about a shift in power from the supermarkets and big business towards the consumers, employees and small farmers.

We seek to break the stranglehold of the multinationals over what we eat and ensure a healthier, cheaper and sustainable supply of home-produced food.

Scotland is a vast, empty country with immense potential to provide a superb quality of life for every citizen.

In a future independent socialist Scotland, a national plan of action would be drawn up to revive and repopulate our empty lands.

The advance of technology combined with a new economic system would open up the prospect of a Scotland where people are no longer forced to live and work in overcrowded, polluted and congested urban jungles.

In the meantime, the SSP will use the limited powers of Holyrood to begin the regeneration of rural Scotland.

#### Key rural policies:

The SSP will:

- Guarantee the right of farmers, crofters and crofting communities to buy their land at a reasonable price at any time.
- Regenerate island economies by introducing 'road-equivalent-tariff' on 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.
- Abolish the Skye Bridge tolls.
- Establish a rail link between Newtonmore and Roybridge to join together the East and West coast Highland lines.
- Exempt single shop villages from business rates.
- Oppose any attempt by landowners to dilute or restrict the new right to roam.
- Establish a publicly funded Land

*For the wealthy – even the moderately wealthy and professional middle class – with their large houses, holiday homes, four-wheel-drives and leisure pursuits, the countryside remains a playground. But for most of Scotland's rural population, the reality is starkly different.*

Access Commission to act as advocate and provide advice and support to those communities and individuals with grievances, and to name and shame landowners with poor access records.

- Establish elected, accountable River Boards to remove fishing rights from the control of private landowners.
- Create and safeguard rural jobs by putting extra resources into marketing the Highlands and Islands, the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway as holiday destinations.
- Restore rural health services that have been slashed over the years.
- Build 20,000 new homes across Scotland's rural communities for low cost rent to local people.
- Introduce legislation to force developers to build at least one house for social housing for every ten private homes built in areas where there is a housing shortage.
- Encourage the spread of farmer's markets in our town centres selling direct to the consumer.
- Assist farmers to shift the balance of their trade away from exports towards providing quality local foods for regional markets.
- Tighten the current loose regulations covering definition of 'Scotch' lamb, beef etc. We will restrict such quality branding to be applied only to animals reared and killed in Scotland.
- Provide grants and assistance to help farmers convert organic farming and animal husbandry.
- Increase funds for new leisure and

community facilities in sparsely populated areas that lack social facilities.

- Promote 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.
- Release funds to increase the numbers of mobile and small cinemas serving isolated areas.
- Halt the closure of small rural schools, particularly primaries.

- Provide extra funding to allow councils to operate more flexible free school transport which does not stick rigidly to the three mile limit.
- Increase 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.
- Carry out a mass vaccination program at the first sign of any future foot and mouth outbreak.

## Action on fishing

If rural Scotland is in a state of crisis, Scotland's fishing communities now stand on the edge of the abyss.



**WE BELIEVE** that the blame for the crisis lies with European Union fisheries policy which has promoted a free-for-all in our waters.

Large-scale industrial fishing corporations have grabbed the opportunity to take advantage of this get-rich-quick scheme and have played a major part in denuding the cod stock to the point of extinction.

We wholly sympathise with the anguish and outrage of fishing communities – though we do not accept the argument presented by a few irresponsible fishing industry spokesmen, that, because the cod won't recover anyway, we should just continue to fish the stock to extinction.

The Grand Banks off Newfoundland – once the largest cod stocks on the planet – have still not recovered twelve years after a total ban on fishing. We must plan for the long-term future of the fishing industry, not just the short term. But if cuts in quotas and large scale tie-ups are

required for a few years we believe the Scottish Executive, Westminster and the European Commission, whose fault this mess is, should fully fund the necessary package of decommissioning, tie-up and diversification schemes.

Financial compensation and support for the duration of the cod regeneration period should not just be for skippers and owners, but also must include crew and their family and those directly involved in ancillary support for the industry, processing and packing.

We will also call for the EU/UK governments to investigate the feasibility of paying tied-up boats to help re-seed the cod fishery using farm-generated cod.

The dual aim must be to preserve a viable whitefishing industry by regenerating the cod fishery, while in the meantime providing transitional relief to minimise hardship.

The SSP will fight to scrap the Common Fisheries Policy, and to democratise and regionalise management of the

future fishing fleet – so that we recognise the regional peculiarities of each fishery – West Coast, North East, Orkney and Shetland, and so on.

We are in favour of the Scottish Executive working to reach agreement with the UK Government and EU on an alternative to the Common Fisheries Policy. Should there be a failure to agree, we would be in favour of the Scottish Executive defying the EU.

#### Key fishing policies:

The SSP will

- Fund independent research into the state of fishing stocks with methods, scientists and parameters fully agreed by all parties, including ecology groups and the fishing communities.
- Press for crews, process and distribution workers laid off as a result of tie-

ups to be paid the minimum wage until alternative employment is found.

- Ban industrial methods of fishing such as gill-netting and campaign throughout Europe for similar measures elsewhere.
- Establish a democratically controlled Fisheries and Marine Agency with the power to dictate net size and type for each kind of fishery and to oversee all aspects of the industry.
- Bring all Port and Harbour Trusts under public ownership and democratic control.
- Reverse the closures of coastguard stations to ensure an adequate umbrella of protection.
- Introduce a non-transferable Landing Licence to help stabilise the industry. This would replace all existing shore charges.

## Action on the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector is a vast and diverse network of 50,000 not-for-profit independent organisations.

**THEY RANGE** from famous national charities – which often operate like large private companies – to local community groups.

They are involved in an extensive range of activities, including education, childcare, support for the elderly, youth work, transport, recreation, housing, anti-poverty initiatives and ecology.

Without the army of thousands of dedicated volunteers who give up their time free of charge, civic society would grind to a halt.

The voluntary sector is also a vital cog in the Scottish economy, providing employment to 100,000 workers and

generating four per cent of our national wealth – double that of agriculture.

However the voluntary sector faces a constant battle for resources, with different organisations forced to compete with one another for funding.

Many projects have a precarious existence, all too often reliant on funding packages that are reviewed annually.

Meanwhile employees in the voluntary sector tend to suffer worse and lower pay than their counterparts in the public sector, and are often denied trade union recognition.

At the same time, there has been a disturbing trend in recent years towards





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transferring control over vital services away from elected and accountable local authorities to unelected and unaccountable not-for-profit organisations.

Examples include the Glasgow housing stock transfer and the transfer of Scottish water and sewage over to unelected quangos.

The SSP opposes this move to stripping local authorities of their powers.

The voluntary sector should not seek to duplicate services which should be provided by local government. Instead it should be innovative and different.

*RATTLING THE CAN: essential services in society should not be left to charity*

We also believe that the voluntary sector is governed by archaic legislation which creates absurd anomalies.

For example, private schools, private hospitals and government quangos are entitled to charity status, with all the associated advantages such as tax breaks. Yet many environmental groups, pensioners' organisations and human rights bodies are denied this status because they are deemed to be political.

For most voluntary organisations, the most effective way to operate is to become a charity. Yet there are no laws defining what a charity should do or how it should function.

The Scottish Socialist Party recognises the vital role played by voluntary organisations. We will work with organisations such as the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations to modernise the voluntary sector.

We will also strive to democratise local





planning and decision-making by shifting the balance of power away from central government agencies and businesses towards genuinely democratic community groups and local trade unionists.

**Key policies for the voluntary sector:**  
The SSP will:

- Move immediately to implement charity law reform in line with the McFadden Commission report. Our aim would be to ensure that charities are independent and non-profit distributing; that their accounts are publicly registered; that they are properly monitored; that there is no misuse of funds; and that there is no discrimination against campaigning charities.
- Establish a four-year minimum funding limit for all publicly funded projects, and ensure that the funding takes into account inflation and provision of staff training. This would reduce the

*CLOSING TIME: The SSP will assist voluntary organizations by exempting them from punitive water charges*

*We will also strive to democratise local planning and decision-making by shifting the balance of power away from central government agencies and businesses towards genuinely democratic community groups and local trade unionists.*

atmosphere of uncertainty that constantly surrounds those projects which are funded on a year-to-year basis.

- Establish democratic boards of management for all local facilities, including libraries, schools and community centres. These boards would involve representatives from the council, from community groups and from the relevant local trade union branches.
- Restore water relief to voluntary organisations and ensure that any future government policy initiatives are checked for impact on the voluntary sector.
- Provide central funding to the Care Commission which monitors social care projects. As things stand, the Care Commission is self-funding – which means care organisations are forced to pay the costs of inspection.
- Invest in democracy by funding training programmes for independent community representatives. This would be done through the Council for Voluntary Services.
- Democratise local planning by ensuring that elected and accountable community representatives have at least 50 per cent representation in all planning forums.
- Encourage genuine grassroots democracy by working with the Council of Voluntary Services and the existing network of community groups to train independent community representatives.
- Insist that all publicly funded projects guarantee trade union recognition and provide trade union rates of pay and conditions to all paid employees.
- Invest in not-for-profit community transport by funding an increase in services and routes.
- Increase funding to youth work and reform the funding allocation system so that national youth and sporting organisations are not forced to negotiate with 32 separate local authorities.

# Action on sport, culture and entertainment

Scotland continues to produce an outstanding amount of talented men and women in all aspects of cultural life.



**IN THE** worlds of theatre, film and literature Scotland punches well above its weight. At the same time, however, millions of the poorest Scots are excluded from key aspects of cultural activity.

The SSP is the only party genuinely committed to including the majority of the population in Scotland's artistic output and cultural life.

We have been involved in establishing an Edinburgh People's Festival running alongside the city's annual arts festival, and have taken a similar initiative in Glasgow.

## Key cultural and sporting policies:

The SSP will:

- Provide free access to all publicly owned cultural and recreational centres including art galleries, museums and sports centres.
- Provide Gaelic language lessons for all children and adults who wish to learn the language.
- Give Gaelic and Scots equal legal status with English.
- Allocate special resources to assist the development of the various ethnic cultures that have enriched Scotland over the past half-century.
- Open discussions with senior football clubs with the aim of persuading them to distribute a portion of their seats, free of charge, to pensioners and benefit claimants via local community councils.
- Work with senior football clubs to provide free football coaching schools in local communities open to boys and girls.
- Develop coaching and training facilities to allow Scottish athletes to compete at world class levels.
- Provide free swimming lessons for all primary school pupils
- Replace elitist quangos such as the Scottish Arts Council with more representative bodies which would involve representatives from all spheres of the arts.
- Support the establishment of a Scottish Six O'Clock news and campaign for the responsibility for broadcasting to be transferred to the Scottish Parliament.
- Establish a national film studio in Scotland to develop the outstanding acting, writing, and film-making talent that has emerged over the past decade.
- Fund the setting up of a national theatre to commission and perform new work throughout Scotland.
- Fully fund Scottish Opera and keep admission prices low.
- Establish local recording studios across Scotland to encourage the development of musical talent.
- Work with anti-sectarian campaigns to break the link between religious sectarianism and football.
- Convene a conference of artists to launch 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. Such a project would provide paid employment for hundreds of creative artists.
- Double the arts budget.

# Action to protect animals

The SSP is opposed to animal cruelty.



**WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY** supported the private members bill to ban hunting with hounds in Scotland, and we condemn Tony Blair's cowardly retreat before the pro-hunting lobby in England by promising that the barbaric practice can continue under licence.

The progressive ban on foxhunting introduced by the Scottish Parliament should be the starting point for a thoroughgoing review of animal welfare in Scotland.

## Key animal rights policies

The SSP will:

- Resist any attempt to water down the legislation that bans foxhunting in Scotland. We will oppose any attempt to bring in a licensing system as proposed by New Labour in Westminster.

*ANIMAL TRAGIC: The SSP will call for new legislation to ban ill treatment of animals*

- Ban animal testing for cosmetics, household products and military research.
- Ban the unnecessary use of animal testing in medical research.
- Ban the abuse of animals in entertainment and sport.
- End battery farming, factory farming and other forms of intensive farming.
- Introduce legislation to prevent the feeding of toxic substances to farm animals.
- Introduce stringent new legislation for zoos to ensure that animals held in captivity do not suffer ill treatment. Zoos unable to comply with these standards will be closed.
- Introduce similar legislation to prevent cruelty to animals at market and at slaughter.





## Funding our manifesto

As things stand, the Scottish Parliament has limited revenue-raising powers. In the light of experience, it is clear that to function even at a minimal level, Holyrood needs greater fiscal autonomy.

**ALTHOUGH OUR** 200 policies could be legally implemented by the Scottish Parliament, we do not pretend our manifesto could be implemented in its entirety within the financial constraints imposed on Holyrood by Westminster.

But if the people of Scotland vote for our radical manifesto, the SSP would take that as a democratic mandate to implement this programme of radical, sweeping change.

The problem of funding these policies would not be our problem; it would be a problem for the Westminster government.

It is Westminster which is responsible for tying the hands of Holyrood. A Scottish Socialist Party government would set a deficit budget – a people’s budget based on the democratic mandate we have received from the people of Scotland.

We would demand that Westminster either provides the finance to allow us to carry out our democratic mandate, or to give the Scottish Parliament the powers

*In tandem with implementing these 200 policies, the SSP will set a date for an independence referendum, asking the people of Scotland to give us a further mandate to break free of the United Kingdom and take control of our own finances and resources.*

to raise that finance.

In tandem with implementing these 200 policies, the SSP will set a date for an independence referendum, asking the people of Scotland to give us a further mandate to break free of the United Kingdom and take control of our own finances and resources.

Inevitably, some of our opponents will criticise this manifesto because it does not display enough deference to Westminster.

We make no apologies for our insubordination. Our loyalty is not to the imperial institutions of the United Kingdom, but to the ordinary people of Scotland.

# SSP:

## A party with principles

**THE SCOTTISH Socialist Party** will be standing a full team of list candidates in the eight regions of Scotland.

On top of that, we will be contesting 71 of Scotland's 73 first-past-the-post seats – the exceptions being Falkirk West, where we will be backing independent socialist MSP Dennis Canavan, and Strathkelvin & Bearsden, where we will support Jean Turner, a local GP who has spearheaded the campaign to save Stobhill hospital.

In contrast to the practice in parties such as Labour and the SNP, Scottish Socialist Party candidates are elected on the basis of a 'one member - one vote' secret ballot. List candidates have been selected by SSP members at regional level; first-past-the-post candidates are selected by party members at constituency level.

SSP list candidates were selected by a system that guarantees gender balance. Four of the eight regional lists are headed by women and four by men.

The Scottish Socialist Party believes that elected politicians should be paid a fair salary which is in line with that paid to other skilled and professional workers.

As things stand, back-bench MSPs are paid £48,000 while ministers are paid between £90,000 and £140,000. In contrast, more than 95 per cent of Scottish workers earn below £43,000 and 80 per cent of Scottish workers earn less than £27,000.

In line with the constitution of the party, all SSP candidates have pledged to live, if elected, on no more than the average salary of a skilled, professional Scottish worker.

The actual figure will be based on statistics supplied by the Scottish Parliament, covering earnings for professional, technical and craft occupations. In 2002, the average gross earnings across these categories worked out at £24,676 a year.

SSP candidates have pledged total transparency in all financial affairs, with details of all additional income, including expenses, published on the party's website.

### **All SSP candidates pledge to:**

- Live on no more than the average professional/technical/craft wage. Concretely, that means that SSP MSPs will donate approximately half their salaries to help the fight for socialism in Scotland.
- Publish details of all expenses and how they have been spent.
- Provide a monthly report of their activities which will be published on the SSP website.
- Hold regular surgeries and open meetings to allow local people to hold their MSP to account.
- Actively support workers' struggles in defence of jobs, wages and working conditions.
- Actively support community struggles in defence of local facilities.
- Actively participate in protests against war and against nuclear weapons.

*SSP candidates have pledged total transparency in all financial affairs, with details of all additional income, including expenses, published on the party's website.*

# SSP:

## Daring to be different

THE PEOPLE of Scotland have an important decision to make on May 1, 2003. You can vote for more of the same, for business as usual, for another four years of stale, grey porridge.

If that's what you want, then by all means stick with the boring clones of New Labour, the Lib Dems, the SNP and the Tories.

Alternatively, you can vote to shake things up and make things happen by voting for Scotland's dynamic, trail-blazing, anti-establishment party.

The SSP is the party that dares to be different, the party that dares to think big, the party that dares to stand up to the rich and powerful.

We are not fanatics or extremists. But neither are we timid sycophants or mindless conformists.

Society has always been divided into two camps: those who want to stand still and those who want to move forward.

We stand in the proud tradition of those men and women down through the ages who have courageously challenged slavery, injustice and inequality and fought to make the world a better place.

Even in the four short years since the Scottish Parliament was opened, the world has undergone profound upheaval. Back in 1999, the free market system appeared as stable and as permanent as a mountain range.

As the editor of *The Economist*, Bill Emmott, wrote in his assessment of the 20th century: "The fin de siècle has been an astonishingly positive period, far more positive than most people in the 1980s, and certainly the gloomy 1990s, would have thought possible."

That reflected the mood of the global



*HUCKLED:*  
Tommy Sheridan under arrest for participating in a peaceful protest against nuclear weapons

ruling classes in the twilight days of the 20th century.

But suddenly, global rebellion began to stir. Starting in Seattle – the richest city in the richest country on the globe – a movement for global justice erupted onto the streets.

Across Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia, millions have marched and protested against the injustices and inequalities of globalisation.

This international movement is more than just a protest against the worst excesses of the free market: it represents, at least in rudimentary form, a challenge to the very existence of the free market, profit system.

*We live in a world of startling contradictions. We have the technical means and resources to feed, clothe and house every human being comfortably. We have learned to perform medical miracles, including heart, liver and lung transplants.*

We live in a world of startling contradictions. We have the technical means and resources to feed, clothe and house every human being comfortably. We have learned to perform medical miracles, including heart, liver and lung transplants.

The advance of technology has meant that millions of families have TVs, videos, central heating, microwave ovens and dishwashers. Computers can perform feats that would have seemed like something out of a science fiction movie just a generation ago.

Yet instead of looking forward with confidence to the future, many people have become fearful of what tomorrow might bring.

Starvation stalks Africa, Asia and Latin America. Environmentalists warn of imminent global catastrophe as our climate goes haywire. Even the food we eat is suspect.

Not just in the permanently depressed Southern Hemisphere, but even in the wealthy North, poverty, unemployment, alienation, homelessness, crime, inequality and insecurity run rampant as never before.

On top of that, the world has become a more dangerous place than at any time since the second world war.

After generations of vicious humiliation, forced destitution and brutal subjugation by the West the people of the Middle East have begun to retaliate.

In the supposedly oil-rich Middle East, millions have less to eat than the pampered pets of middle class and upper class America.

Palestinians whose parents and grand-

parents were forcibly driven from their homes now live in human battery farms on the West Bank and suffer daily repression and humiliation at the hands of the Israeli state, bristling with weapons supplied by the United States.

In this entire tortured region, hatred of the richest and most powerful country in the world is engraved on the hearts of little children.

The SSP does not support suicide bombings or other acts of terrorism. We stand for a political solution based on redistribution of the world's resources and justice for the Palestinian people.

And we oppose 100 per cent the gung-ho militarism of the warlords in suits who are now unleashing carnage on the people of Iraq.

As an internationalist and humanitarian party, the SSP campaigns against tyranny and oppression. We support the struggles of the Kurds and Shia people of Iraq who are fighting for self-determina-

*WHAT IS IT  
GOOD FOR?  
Capitalism  
means war  
without end*





tion against the brutal Iraqi regime. We support those democratic and progressive forces who have faced torture and execution within Iraq.

But the war in Afghanistan, the war in Iraq, the future wars that may be waged against other countries that step out of line – these are not wars of liberation, or wars to bring about peace and stability.

These are wars of the rich and powerful against the poor and powerless, wars to bring the world under the thumb of American multinational capitalism.

The only war we should be waging in the Middle East and across the Third World is a war against poverty, starvation and disease.

Inside parliament and outside parliament the SSP will strive to build a mass movement of resistance to war.

At the same time we will work with other socialists across the UK, Europe and worldwide to build a new world, free from war, free from hunger, free from inequality, free from exploitation, free from injustice.

The Scottish Socialist Party is already one of the strongest anti-capitalist, pro-socialist parties in Europe. And are now poised to achieve the biggest vote for socialism ever recorded in Scotland or any other part of the UK.

We do not claim that a group of SSP MSPs elected to the Scottish Parliament on May 1 will in itself transform Scotland.

But an SSP breakthrough would signal the end of the cosy consensus that accepts poverty, inequality, greed and exploitation as a natural state of affairs.

It would force onto the political agenda issues that most mainstream politicians would prefer to ignore, including wealth redistribution, public ownership and workplace and community democracy.

If you're a fatcat company director, an aristocratic landowner or a wealthy banker, it's unlikely you'll want to sup-



*NO PIPE DREAM: Socialism is now well and truly on the march in Scotland*

port the SSP. If you're a dyed-in-the-wool racist, a trade union hater or a George Bush worshipper, feel free to take your vote elsewhere.

But if you're against the illegal war on Iraq; if you're in favour of a fair deal for our low paid workers; if you're dismayed by the growing gulf between rich and poor; if you want quality public services; if you want to move towards an independent socialist Scotland based on the principles of equality, solidarity, social justice and generosity, this is your party.

Give us your vote on May 1. Better still, become a member of the Scottish Socialist Party, the party of the future.

*The Scottish Socialist Party is already one of the strongest anti-capitalist, pro-socialist parties in Europe. And are now poised to achieve the biggest vote for socialism ever recorded in Scotland or any other part of the UK.*



**Scottish  
Socialist  
Party**

**You can help  
make another  
Scotland possible**

**Join the SSP now**

for more information on the SSP in your area  
or to join Scotland's fastest growing party  
contact us.

*email: [ssp.membership@btconnect.com](mailto:ssp.membership@btconnect.com) tel: 0141 221 7714  
or: 0131 557 0426*

*or drop us a line at 73 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8QD  
or 17-23 Calton Road, Edinburgh EH8*

Photos courtesy of Duncan Brown, Craig MacLean, Graeme Stewart and Scottish Socialist Voice

£2.50



for an independent socialist Scotland