

Scottish Socialist Party

European Election Manifesto 2004



for a different Europe

About the SSP



The Scottish Socialist Party is Scotland's newest, fastest growing and most radical political party. Just six years old, the SSP now has six MSPs in the Scottish Parliament and a network of scores of branches in every corner of Scotland, from Stromness to Stranraer, from Selkirk to Stornoway.

In the 2003 Scottish election, the swing to the SSP was by far the most spectacular feature of a general uprising against the four big parties, which lost over a million votes.

In the first-past-the-post ballot, support for the SSP soared from under 1 per cent to over 6 per cent. In the second proportional ballot, the Scottish Socialist vote rose from just under 2 per cent to almost 7 per cent. With six MSPs, the SSP is represented across the whole of the central belt and southern Scotland, from the Clyde to the Forth and from the Solway Firth to the North Sea.

Inside the Scottish Parliament, the SSP has already emerged as the most effective, dynamic and radical opposition to the New Labour - Lib Dem coalition.

Just months into the parliament, the party has launched a series of bills, with others in the pipeline, that will have a far-reaching impact on the lives of millions. Legislation that is being championed by Scottish Socialist MSPs include bills to:

- Provide universal free school meals.
- Scrap the Council Tax.
- Offer single vaccines as an alternative to MMR.
- Abolish prescription charges.
- Improve drug treatment facilities.
- Bring Scotrail back into public ownership.

All six Scottish Socialist MSPs also honoured their election pledges to live on no more than the average wage of a skilled worker. Each of these MSPs donates half their salary to the party.

The SSP is more than just another electoral party whose sole ambition is to get politicians elected into parliaments and councils.

Most of our activity is conducted outside parliament, on the streets, in the communities, in the workplaces, in the universities and colleges.

Since 2001, the SSP has been the most active anti-war party in Scotland. From day one, we opposed the reckless and deceitful "war on terror".

There will never be peace in the world without justice. That means national justice for the Palestinian people who for generations have suffered daily repression and humiliation at the hands of the Israeli state, bristling with weapons supplied by the United States. And it means economic and social justice for the billions of people across the Third World who live at the edge of starvation.

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Day in, day out, the SSP fights all forms of injustice at local, national and international level. As well opposing the murderous warmongering of Blair and Bush, our campaigning work includes:

- Fighting low pay and long hours in the workplace.
- Resisting privatisation in all its forms and guises.
- Challenging racism and other forms of bigotry and discrimination.
- Defending local facilities from closure.
- Opposing extravagant spending on new urban motorways.
- Standing up for a better deal for pensioners.
- Exposing cruelty to animals.
- Challenging all threats to public health, from nuclear waste dumps to GM crops.
- Participating in direct action against the weapons of mass destruction sited on the Clyde.
- Assisting those resisting military, national and political oppression across the globe.
- Promoting redistribution of wealth from rich to poor, in Scotland and internationally.
- Supporting workers forced to take strike action to defend their jobs, livelihoods and working conditions.
- Campaigning for the closure of Dungavel detention centre and for the rights of asylum seekers including the Ay family, Mercy Ikolo and the Kurdish hunger strikers.
- Helping set up a unified Independence Convention, involving the SSP, the SNP, the Greens and other pro-independence forces across Scotland.



Photo credit: Craig MacLean



Photo credit: Duncan Brown

The European elections: why you should vote

It would be fair to say that June 10 is not exactly a red-letter day in the calendars of most Scots. That's the day Europe goes to the polls to elect a new parliament.

All the signs point to a rock bottom turnout in Scotland and across the UK.

That partly reflects a general disillusionment with politics and politicians. It also reflects the fact that the European Union and its institutions are as remote from ordinary people as the planet Pluto.

For the past four years, Scotland has had eight MEPs drawn from the four old establishment political parties.

How many of these MEPs can you name – unless they happen to have been caught up in a row over expenses?

The fact is, the European Union is largely run, not by elected politicians, but by unelected bankers and bureaucrats.

So is there any point in voting on June 10? Our answer is a resounding **YES**.

First, because June 10 gives the ordinary people of Scotland a chance to scream out in rage against the barbarism being inflicted on Iraq in our name.

We were told this was a war to rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction. This was a lie. There never were any weapons of mass destruction, as we all now know.

But there was mass deception of the

peoples of the world by the President of the USA and the Prime Minister of the UK aided and abetted by their armies of hired liars, otherwise known as spin-doctors.

When that fraud was exposed, we were then told the war was justified because it rid Iraq of a tyrant who tortured and executed his opponents.

Saddam Hussein may be in captivity, his statues reduced to thousands of pieces of rubble. But as we know from sickening photographic evidence, savagery, torture and brutality are alive and flourishing under the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack.

If there is only one reason to get to the polling station on June 10, it can be summed up in one four letter word: IRAQ.

The leaders of the Liberal Democrats and the SNP have called for the European elections to be turned into a referendum on Blair's disastrous, gung-ho Arabian adventure. The Scottish Socialist Party would echo this call.

But anyone who wants to use this election to stand up for peace in Iraq and across the Middle East will be wasting their vote if they use it to back either the SNP or the Liberal Democrats.

Far from being resolute opponents of war, they have wavered and dithered at each new turn.

Both parties supported the war in

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Afghanistan – a war which strengthened rather than weakened Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda.

Both parties opposed the invasion of Iraq – but admitted they would have supported the invasion if the US and Britain had only succeeded in bullying and bribing the United Nations into passing a resolution in support of war.

Now, neither the SNP nor the Liberal Democrats are prepared to support the call for British troops to be removed from Iraq.

In contrast the Scottish Socialist Party has stood fearlessly against the war-mongering of Bush and Blair from day one, irrespective of the ups and downs of opinion polls.

We opposed the bombing of Afghanistan, warning that victory for the US and Britain in this grotesquely uneven contest would not bring peace and stability to the world, but would inflame Islamist fundamentalism and strengthen al Qaeda.

We opposed on principle the invasion of Iraq, with or without the backing of a UN resolution.

And we are now spearheading the campaign in Scotland to end the occupation of Iraq.

Most Iraqis want western troops out immediately. In a recent poll for the USA Today newspaper and the CNN TV network – conducted before the revelations of torture and humiliation - 57 per cent

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said that they wanted western troops out now.

Seventy one per cent said US and UK troops were “occupiers” rather than “liberators” – a figure that rose to 81 per cent if the Kurdish minority in Northern Iraq were excluded.

Among the Shia population, who were viciously oppressed by Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, there is equally strong opposition to the presence of US and British troops.

In this European election campaign, the SSP will be calling for British troops out of Iraq and for the European Union to stand up in opposition to the occupation.

This European election is also an opportunity to protest at the growing wealth gulf between rich and poor, in Scotland and worldwide.

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Here in Scotland, the gap between the richest and the poorest grows wider by the day. The chief executive of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Fred Goodwin, last year made £3.2 million in salary and bonuses – the equivalent of 250 years pay for a nursery nurse.

The Scottish Socialist Party is Scotland's anti-poverty and anti-greed party. A vote for the SSP is a vote for redistribution of wealth and for the honourable cause of socialist equality.

This election is also a chance to declare which side you are on and what kind of Scotland you want to live in.

Do you want a Scotland which is forever subordinate to external forces: bankers, bureaucrats, shareholders in London,

Brussels and New York? Or do you want a Scotland which is genuinely free and independent?

Do you want a Scotland whose oil wealth is ripped off by corporate capitalists while a third of our people live in poverty? Or do you want a Scotland which controls its own resources – our oil, our land, our fishing, our transport system, our industries?

Do you want a Scotland with vast empty spaces and the fastest declining population in Europe, while Westminster orders us to lock out those who want to come to our country, many of them fleeing famine and persecution? Or do you want a truly internationalist Scotland which welcomes people with open arms rather than with mailed fists?

Do you want a Scotland which is part of the British war machine, which sends young working class soldiers to kill and die for the glory of American Presidents, and which is bristling with enough nuclear weapons to erase entire continents from the globe? Or do you want a peaceful, non-aligned Scotland which will stand on the side of justice rather than on the side of might and wealth.

Do you want a Scotland which is a dumping ground for nuclear and toxic waste and whose rivers and seas and landscapes are polluted with poisons? Or do you want a clean, green Scotland which can set a shining example to the rest of the world?

And, of course, the election is about the European Union and how it run.

The SSP is an internationalist party. We reject the Union Flag-waving, Rule Britannia-singing europhobia of the Tory right.

We are pro-European. We want to extend the hand of friendship to all the peoples of Europe, east and west.

But that does not mean we are pro-European Union. In this manifesto we set out our critique of the European Union and its top down, bureaucratic,

ultra-centralised institutions.

We argue for a different Europe. A diverse and democratic Europe.

A Europe based on voluntary co-operation from below. A Europe in which all nations are equal.

A Europe of the peoples rather than a Europe of the multinational corporations and the big nation states.

In the meantime, we are striving to build an independent socialist Scotland, which in turn could act as the catalyst for the socialist transformation of the entire European continent.



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Neither London or Brussels

Internationalism and globalisation

Socialism has always been an internationalist philosophy. The historic anthem of the socialist movement is The Internationale, with its rousing call to “unite the human race”.

Even before the invention of the motor car, the aeroplane, the telephone, radio and TV, the early pioneers of socialism were articulating their imaginative vision of a future socialist world.

In today’s world of the internet, satellite TV, high-speed air travel and global capitalism, the idea of international socialism can no longer be derided as a utopian fantasy. The starry-eyed dreamers of the 21st century are those who imagine it is possible to hide behind national walls and live in permanent quarantine from the rest of the world.

But internationalism does not mean subscribing to a theory that asserts that bigger is always better.

The immediate goal of the SSP is not to create gigantic mega-states, nor to

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replace capitalist globalisation with socialist globalisation. Our aim is to build socialism from below – a socialism that is based on decentralisation, diversity and voluntary co-operation between nations.

Socialism in the 21st century will not be built from the top tables of Brussels downwards, but will have to be fought for at local and national level upwards.

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But there is nothing intrinsically internationalist or progressive about a united Europe, any more than there is anything intrinsically progressive or internationalist about the United Kingdom. The first political party in Britain to call for a European Union was Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists in 1949, which called for a ‘New Europe’.

As it stands, the European Union is neither progressive nor internationalist. The philosophy underlying the European Union is essentially right wing.

During the period when social democratic parties dominated Europe, some minor reforms were tolerated as a means of heading off potential trade union and left wing opposition to the EU project. The necessity for this charade reflected the different political balance of forces in

Europe as compared with the USA; there was recognition that it would be impossible to hold Europe together without at least some progressive concessions.

But as a general rule, the institutions of the European Union are reactionary and conservative. Those European bodies which have acted as a check against injustice, such as the European Court of Human Rights, exist completely independently of the European Union

The project of European integration has always been driven primarily by Europe's multinational corporations and their political representatives.

Their aim is to create a powerful bloc – ultimately a superstate – that can compete head on with the USA and Asia in the struggle for global economic and political domination.

Resisting globalisation – A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Help spearhead the fight for an independent socialist Scotland based on the principles of equality, democracy, liberty, generosity and solidarity.
- Work with the European Social Forum to promote the idea of a different Europe based on social need rather than financial greed.
- Work with refugee and immigrant organisations to repeal the Schengen Agreement which seeks to turn Europe into a fortress against refugees and immigrants from the Third World and non-EU Eastern European states.
- Work with the European anti-war movement to halt Bush and Blair's disastrously counter-productive war against terror.
- Link up with progressive forces worldwide to demand the closure of the World Trade Organisation and other corporate quangos.
- Work with anti-debt campaigners to demand the cancellation of all Third World Debt.

- Build direct links with left and progressive political parties and movements resisting national oppression in Europe and worldwide.

A PROFITEERS PARADISE

The immediate priority of the rulers of the EU is to restructure the economies of Europe to enable free market capitalism to flourish and profitability to soar.

In the last two years, the balance of power within the EU has shifted decisively to the right. Of the existing 15 states, 10 are run by right wing conservative governments, which in turn have a stranglehold over the powerful Council of Ministers.

The biggest bloc in the European Parliament is now the European Peoples Party, the umbrella that includes the British Tory Party. Even after enlargement, the balance within Europe will break down into 16 conservative right governments, seven New Labour-style centrist governments and two centre-right coalitions.

Moreover, even the centre-left social democratic governments of Europe are essentially free market Thatcherites. In recent article in the Guardian, "Modernise or Die", the German President, Gerald Schroeder argued that in order to survive and compete, Europe had to dismantle the old-style welfare state, cut labour costs and drive forward privatisation programmes.

This is entirely in tune with the ethos at the heart of the European Union,

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which is pro-big business, pro-free market and anti-public sector.

At the heart of the EU project is the principle of maximum freedom for capital. It is, in essence, a regional version of unbridled globalisation: a vast economic bazaar where multinationals reign supreme, where profit is sacrosanct and where the peoples of Europe are forced to participate in a race backwards, a race to the bottom.

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These states of 'New Europe' where wages are approximately one third of 'Old Europe', now offer the best of all worlds to transnational capitalism. They have an educated workforce and a reasonably well-developed infrastructure.

At the same time they offer sweatshop wages and conditions and bargain basement tax rates. And on top of that, they now offer direct access to the lucrative free market that is the European Union.

Poland, Hungary and Latvia all have corporate tax rates below 20 per cent. Slovakia has a 19 per cent flat rate tax for all corporate and personal income. Yet its workforce earns just one fifth of the wages of workers in neighbouring Austria.

It has become a magnet for investors with car factories queuing up to relocate there. In response Austria has cut its corporate tax rates from 34 per cent to 25

per cent to compete.

Meanwhile, despite the New Labourite pro-capital policies of the German government, which recently announced a package of tax cuts to big business and the rich totalling £10 billion, big business itself is still not satisfied. The head of the country's chamber of commerce has advised his members to invest in central Europe rather than "wait for better policies in Germany".

Blizzard upon blizzard of redundancies are likely to descend upon the UK, France, Germany, Sweden and other countries of 'Old Europe' as capital joins the gold rush eastwards to grab the opportunity for sky high profits.

At the same time, national governments in northern and western Europe will be forced to make their national economies more competitive by driving down labour costs and cutting taxes to big business and the rich. Inevitably, these tax cuts will be financed by slashing spending on pensions, benefits, health, education, transport and other public services.

Defending workers rights: A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Offer support and solidarity to trade unionists across Europe resisting closures, redundancies and privatisation.
- Offer support and solidarity to communities across Europe fighting to protect their schools, hospitals and social amenities against cuts and closures.
- Support any progressive legislation before the European Parliament which defends or improves the rights of working people against their employers.
- Help to organise European-wide links among workers employed by the same multinational corporations.
- Offer full support and practical assistance to any worker in Scotland facing

redundancy as a result of relocation of businesses to more lucrative pastures within the European Union.

- Fight for the right of all workers in the European Union to join a trade union and take strike action.
- Work with the left wing parties that make up the European Anti-Capitalist Left to help build a powerful, continent-wide movement with the goal of a socialist Europe.

FORCED UNITY

The proposed new European Constitution will massively reinforce the bureaucratic centralist and pro-big business character of the European Union.

Ironically, the preamble of the draft constitution reminds us that the ancient state of Athens was a direct democracy. Yet this constitution was drafted by an elite, unelected club behind the backs of the peoples of Europe. If adopted it will shift even more power away from elected national, regional and local government to the bankers and bureaucrats of Frankfurt and Brussels.

It insists “the constitution and laws adopted by the EU’s institutions shall have primacy over the laws of member states”. It would further erode the already restricted powers of local government and devolved assemblies, including the Scottish Parliament, by compelling all tiers of government in Europe to throw open all public services to “compulsory competitive tendering”.

The draft constitution legally forbids any attempt by member states to infringe the freedom of private profiteers. It pledges to uphold “the integrity of existing member states” – a veiled threat to outlaw any future towards independence by small nations such as Scotland, Wales, Catalonia and the Basque Country.

While allowing citizens of the EU to move freely between European states, it seeks to turn the continent into a giant

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fortress, locking out refugees fleeing persecution and starvation in the Third World. And it legally obliges the EU and its member states from now on to reinforce their military might and act in close co-operation with NATO.

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The festering bitterness in Scotland’s fishing communities towards Europe is a foretaste of the rancour that will erupt in urban communities in the future as industry relocates to Eastern Europe aided and abetted by Brussels.

Paradoxically, the more successful the rulers of Europe are in establishing the structures of a federal superstate, the more powerful will be the centrifugal forces from below. Even relatively small and homogeneous constructs within Europe, such as the UK and Spain, have failed to transform themselves from multinational states to unified nation states; such is the power of national identity and the sense of national injustice in the smaller nationalities within the UK and the Spanish State.

The Treaty of Union, which absorbed Scotland into a new Anglo-British state, led to civil unrest, military rebellion and savage repression for half a century. A semblance of British identity was eventually achieved as a by-product of the colossal advance of British capitalism, paid for by the blood and bones of millions in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Even then, national divisions were only temporarily sidelined. Today, pro-independence parties command widespread support within the marginalised nations of the UK and the Spanish State.

Yet the European Union is even more of patchwork quilt of nationalities, divided by language, geography, history and culture. Those who dream of building a capitalist United States of Europe along the lines of the USA are trying to defy the laws of gravity.

When the constitution of the USA was drawn up, the total population of the 13 colonies that were unified into a single state was just four million – less than the population of Scotland today. In today's money, the total GDP of the USA was less than next year's budget for the NHS in Scotland. Those governmental institutions that the USA supplanted were either weak or non-existent.

In contrast, today's European Union embraces 350 million a people, a multi-trillion pound budget, 25 states, dozens of nationalities and highly developed national political structures, which have evolved over generations.

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Defending democracy: A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Demand a Scotland-wide referendum on the draft European Constitution because of the impact it will have on the workings of the Scottish Parliament and on the right of the Scottish people to move towards independence.
- Campaign for a No vote in any Scottish or UK-wide referendum on the new constitution.
- Support the right of all member states to veto common foreign policy.
- Oppose any move towards establishing a European defence force.
- Support the right of neutrality for all member states.
- Campaign for the abolition of NATO.
- Support the signing up of the EU to the European Court of Human Rights (a separate body which predates the old Common Market) to provide some measure of control over the EU.

THE EURO STRAITJACKET

An independent Scotland would be forced to join the Eurozone or be expelled from the EU. All new entrants – and Scotland would almost certainly be classified as a new entrant – are obliged to adopt the euro and to surrender monetary policy to the European Central Bank. Under the Treaty of Rome, once monetary policy is transferred to the European Central Bank, that decision is “irrevocable and irreversible”. Scotland would effectively become an economic prisoner, held under house arrest by the bankers of Frankfurt.

In the past, pro-independence politicians justifiably criticised the one-size-fits-all UK monetary union, which is essentially geared to the populous and economically dominant South East.

“Why should economically depressed regions such as Clydeside suffer under a

monetary regime which is designed to dampen down the overheating Home Counties?" asked the SNP.

Yet now the SNP enthusiastically support signing up to the Euro – which means submitting to yet another ‘one-size-fits-all’ right wing monetary regime – except now it stretches, not from London to Lerwick, but from the North Pole to the Mediterranean.

The controversial Growth and Stability Pact is not merely a whim of the Frankfurt-based commanders of the European Central Bank. Economic convergence is a necessary precondition for a workable single currency.

The Pact forces national governments into a financial straitjacket, imposing draconian penalties against any government that allows its budget deficit to rise above three per cent of its national GDP. Even the big two EU powers, France and Germany – notwithstanding their attempts to bend the rules – are now coming under intense pressure to balance their books before 2005.

The Growth and Stability Pact could have a devastating impact on Scotland and the UK in the event of a future recession, when tax revenues decline steeply and welfare spending rises sharply.

In principle, the SSP has no problem with the idea of a common currency. But what is now at stake is not the Queen's head on our coins, or the Forth Bridge on our banknotes, but our welfare state, our essential services and the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of public sector workers.

Fighting economic inequality: A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Oppose the Growth and Stability Pact which threatens to decimate public services in Scotland.
- Fight to close down the European Central Bank, which is driven by right wing, free market ideology.

- Campaign against the euro and promote the idea of an independent socialist Scotland with full control over its own currency, interest rates and money supply.
- Back the campaign for a ‘Tobin Tax’ on international cross-border financial transactions. This would generate tens of billions globally for anti-poverty and environmental programmes.
- Oppose and resist all forms of privatisation and deregulation of trade, industry and public services.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

The EU was never intended as a force for social progress. Its entire construction is designed to protect the political and economic elites of Europe from the pressures of ordinary people. Its tangled webs of elaborate structures and labyrinthine decision-making processes are as comprehensible to most ordinary Europeans as Newton's mathematical equations.

The politicians and bureaucrats who run the European Union are paid salaries and expense accounts, which almost guarantee their immunity from dangerous diseases such as egalitarianism. Members of the 20 strong European Commission, for example, are paid £180,000 virtually tax-free plus almost unlimited expenses. British MEPs have just voted themselves a 30 per cent rise in

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The Council of Ministers, the supreme decision-making body of the European Union, meets in secret. The few open debates are pre-rehearsed public relations exercises. Public access to information, including minutes, voting records, even decisions of the Council, is heavily restricted, with categories of concealment ranging from “confidential” to “top secret”. In reality the decision-making process at the Council of Ministers largely consists of the biggest states carving things up in their own interests.

EU policy is largely initiated by the European Commission, which devises and proposes most legislation. Commissioners are appointed by national governments and a new Commission is due to be appointed next year until 2009. Because of the rightward shift in Europe’s political centre of gravity over the past few years, the new Commission will be totally dominated by right wing, ultra-conservative parties.

Economic policy is largely controlled by the European Central Bank, which is in turn run by a six-strong executive of bankers. These six are appointed for eight years and cannot be removed, except on the grounds of incapacity or gross misconduct. They are completely beyond the control of elected politicians and national governments; yet have vast powers including control over interest rates and money supply.

The one directly elected EU institution, the European Parliament, offers only a façade of democracy. It has some

powers of co-decision and veto, but even these are restricted to certain policy areas. Despite a gradual increase in powers to the Parliament, it remains weaker than the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Central Bank.

Challenging secrecy: A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Campaign for the unelected European Commission to be downgraded to the status of an administrative back-up unit, confined to implementing decisions and providing information.
- Campaign to force all MEPs and officials to publicly declare any links they have with private businesses.
- Campaign for all decisions and voting records within EU institutions to be made publicly available.

FOR A CLEAN, GREEN EUROPE

Across Europe, rates of cancer, asthma and other life-threatening illnesses are rising relentlessly as a result of toxic contaminants polluting the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe.

Globally, our climate is changing dramatically with sea levels rising alarmingly. Up to one million species are threatened with extinction by 2050, threatening the delicate balance of our global eco-system.

Pollution knows no national borders, as was graphically illustrated in the months and years following the Chernobyl catastrophe. Nuclear power stations in one country threaten the entire European environment. Poisonous emissions threaten the entire global environment.

Whatever the future of the European Union, it will always be necessary to coordinate environmental policy across national borders.

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 cannot be halted on a national basis.

But environmental protection has to be fought for locally and nationally as well as globally. As things stand, Scotland has one of the lowest recycling rates in Europe, at less than 10 per cent out of a possible 90 per cent. The amount of waste our country generates is increasing by 3 million tonnes a year.

At this stage, much of our environmental regulation and protection comes from Europe. As a general rule, the institutions of the European Union act in the interests of big business. But Europe's powerful green and environmental movement has forced the European Parliament and other EU institutions to introduce many progressive directives and conventions.

These include the Electronic and Electrical Waste Directive, which sets targets for recycling of computers, TVs etc; the Groundwater Directive on clean water; the Water Framework Directive on the aquatic environment; and the Aarhus Convention to improve public access to information on sources of local pollution.

The SSP will fight to ensure full implementation and rigid monitoring of these directives in Scotland and across Europe.

At the same time, we co-operate with other progressive parties in the European Parliament for a strengthening of environmental protection across the continent.

At the same time we will battle to prevent the European Union from thwarting progressive local and national initiatives to improve the environment.

For example, the draft European Constitution will guarantee the European Union partial control over energy policy in all member states. This would effectively deny a future independent Scotland the right to close its nuclear power

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plants, or to take into public ownership oil, gas and electricity.

In general, it is poorer people who bear the brunt of environmental pollution. They are more likely to live near hazardous waste dumps, incinerators or power plants.

At local level, the SSP is already involved in a multitude of environmental campaigns, including opposing new motorway projects such as M74 extension, resisting GM crops, and campaigning against landfill sites and incinerators.

Protecting our environment: A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Work closely with environmental organisations in Scotland - including Scottish Environment LINK, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Greenpeace, Transform Scotland, the Marine Conservation Society, Ramblers Association Scotland, RSPB Scotland, Sustrans Scotland, RuralScotland and the Scottish Green Party - to develop a co-ordinated strategy to defend and improve Scotland's environment.
- Work with similar environmental and progressive political parties across Europe for a clean and green environment from the Atlantic Ocean to the Baltic Sea, from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean.
- Fight for full implementation and monitoring in Scotland and across Europe of all progressive EU directives aimed at protecting the environment.
- Step up the fight to close down the

murderous nuclear submarine base at Faslane, which is an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen.

- Campaign for control of Scotland's energy to be removed from London and Brussels and transferred to the Scottish Parliament, so that we can move towards a nuclear free Scotland.
- Promote the case for public ownership of Scotland's oil, gas and electricity and for the use of some of the colossal profits from these sectors to be ring-fenced for investment into wind, wave and solar power.
- Work with the anti-nuclear movement across the continent to build support for a nuclear-free Europe.
- Back legislation to compel big business to meet minimum standards on pollution, emissions and other forms of environmental vandalism.
- Work with rail unions across Europe to pile pressure on the European Union and on member states to carry out a major shift of freight traffic from road to rail.
- Campaign alongside transport unions and transport pressure groups for a European-wide integrated, publicly-owned rail, bus and ferry system as an efficient and inexpensive alternative to air travel. This will require to be fought for at national as well as European level.
- Fight alongside local communities resisting landfill sites.
- Support a revised Packaging Directive which would increase recycling of packaged waste.
- Support new Directives on Batteries and Household Hazardous Waste which would ensure the separate collection of batteries, paint and household cleaning products which contain hazardous substances.
- Support tougher targets for renewable energy production and for energy efficiency in homes, businesses and public premises.
- Support the REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) Directive which will be voted upon this year in the European Parliament; and oppose attempts by the chemicals industry to weaken this directive which should lead to the phasing out of toxic chemicals and tougher new guidelines for the production of new chemicals.
- Support an outright ban on the use of toxic chemicals in children's toys.
- Back legislation at national and continental level to force company directors to become legally liable for the environmental impact of their companies.
- Defend public ownership of Scottish water and fight for greater democratic accountability over the industry.
- Call for a Corporate Accountability Directive to force company directors to become accountable for the social and environmental impact of their companies' activities.
- Back legislation at European and national level to charge heavy goods vehicles for the pollution and damage they cause and to levy special tolls on HGV vehicles.
- Support the introduction of a European-wide charge on aircraft emissions; and to call for these revenues to be ring-fenced to improve ferry links between the European mainland and the more peripheral parts of the continent including Scotland.
- Support moves that will help conserve Scotland's marine environment, which is a major contributor to the Scottish

In general, it is poorer people who bear the brunt of environmental pollution. They are more likely to live near hazardous waste dumps, incinerators or power plants.

economy, as well as being home to almost one third of the world's grey seals and numerous species of sea birds.

- Back the demand of environmental groups for more funding to manage and monitor Special Areas of Conservation and Specially Protected Areas, including marine habitats.

FISHING UNDER THREAT

For countless centuries, fishing has been a way of life in Scotland's coastal communities. Now these communities are fighting for their lives.

It is not just the thousands employed directly on the fishing boats whose livelihoods are under threat.

For every fisherman at sea, another five workers are employed on onshore jobs including workers engaged in fish-processing, boat repair and net manufacturing. In a town like Fraserburgh, with a population of just 12,500 including children, almost 5,000 jobs are dependent on the fishing fleet.

Now, like Scotland's mining communities in the 1980s, the fishing ports are staring oblivion in the face.

Even now, levels of poverty normally associated with Glasgow and the Central Belt have been imported into the small coastal towns of North East Scotland and the islands.

Fishermen who could expect to earn over £20,000 a year a decade ago are now lucky if they manage to take home £12,000.

Skippers, who are mainly running small family businesses, are living on the brink of bankruptcy as they struggle to pay off double mortgages - on their homes and on their boats. And that's before the full impact of the latest European Union ban on cod fishing has hit home.

Some of our politicians and sections of the media blame the fishing communi-

ties themselves for the crisis. This is a travesty of the truth.

Fishing communities have always been painfully aware of the need for conservation. This is a matter of community survival and ensuring the livelihood of future generations. No one knows about the fishing industry and how to preserve than those who have spent their lives working in the oceans.

Scottish fishermen use the largest mesh-size nets in Europe to avoid catching young fish. They have already decommissioned 200 boats.

Much of the blame for the crisis now facing the fishing industry rests with the Common Fisheries Policy, which illuminates in flashing neon lights the hopeless incompetence and monstrous unfairness at the heart of the European Union.

It has failed woefully to meet its two stated objectives of conserving fish stocks and protecting fishing communities. It stood back for decades and allowed giant industrial trawlers to decimate the eco-system of the North Sea.

By the 1990s, half the North Sea catch was destined to be ground up and used for industrial purposes such as the manufacture of animal feed, cakes, biscuits and margarine. The sand eel industrial fishery alone accounted for one third of the North Sea by the mid 1990s - even though sand eels are a vital food source for cod.

Incredibly, industrial fishing was left largely unregulated. In contrast, outside the EU such as in Norway and Iceland

Even now, levels of poverty normally associated with Glasgow and the Central Belt have been imported into the small coastal towns of North East Scotland and the islands.

In scenic areas, housing has become an unaffordable dream for young people on low incomes as wealthy incomers push property prices beyond the reach of local people.

they were prepared to take action, where necessary – including, in the case of Norway, closing down industrial fisheries that were known to be stripping away the feedstuff of cod.

Far from being an efficient device to conserve fish stocks, the CFP has been little more than an annual haggling session, with 15 ministers wrangling over quotas, each concerned only to get the best possible deal for their own countries.

**Fighting for our fishing communities:
A Scottish Socialist MEP will:**

- Oppose outright the failed Common Fisheries Policy.
- Campaign for Scotland to have full control over its own fishing industry, in line with other small northern European nations, including Iceland and the Faroes.
- Demand an immediate ban on all industrial fishing in the North Sea.
- Work with community campaigns such as the Cod Crusaders who are fighting for the future of their communities.
- Fight for a European-wide ban on industrial methods of fishing such as gill-netting.
- Work to unite fishing communities across Europe against the divide and rule methods of national governments and the European Union.
- Work to set up a new concordat of fishermen's representatives, scientists, environmentalists, elected local politi-

cians and trade unionists representing workers in the associated industries. This would aim to draw up a realistic long-term plan to secure the future of fishing communities and fishing stock.

CRISIS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Scotland's rural communities are sliding deeper into decline. Privatisation has meant the virtual end of public transport in whole tracts of rural Scotland. As the crisis in Iraq deepens, petrol prices – already disproportionately higher in rural areas than in the congested heartlands of urban Scotland - threaten to escalate.

The closure of village schools and post offices threatens to rip the heart out of many countryside communities.

In scenic areas, housing has become an unaffordable dream for young people on low incomes as wealthy incomers push property prices beyond the reach of local people.

On top of these local problems, rural communities also suffer from the Common Agricultural Policy, which, instead of encouraging local production for local sale, encourages instead a crazy trade merry-go-round.

This in turn leads to the absurdity of Britain exporting tens of thousands of tonnes of poultry, pork, lamb and milk while simultaneously importing tens of thousands of tonnes of poultry, pork, lamb and milk from the same countries.

Many Scottish small farmers and crofters do benefit from the CAP, especially in those regions that are classified 'Less Favoured Areas' because of their harsh geography.

Most sheep farmers in Scotland would go to the wall if CAP subsidies were removed with no alternative in place.

Nonetheless, the CAP symbolises the monumental incompetence and unfairness at the root of the European Union.

It devours over half the entire EU bud-

get. It adds an estimated £16 a week to the average weekly family grocery bill in the UK.

Yet 80 per cent of CAP subsidies go straight into the bank accounts of the richest 20 per cent of farmers and landowners. The Duke of Westminster, a wealthy billionaire, receives £500,000 a year in subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy.

The whole system is biased towards large-scale intensive farms, which are flooded with chemicals to artificially boost production.

A vast amount of cash is also siphoned off by racketeers and fraudsters who have been able to take advantage of the secrecy and complexity of the institutions that disburse funds.

The CAP is also designed to exclude poor Third World farmers from European markets, while allowing European producers to dump foodstuffs and tobacco on the most impoverished countries of Africa and Asia.

To add insult to injury, every cow in the European Union receives a daily subsidy of £1.50 - which is more than the income of half the world's population.

The SSP will work with others to develop a replacement for the CAP, which would ensure food sovereignty for Scotland and other nations within Europe.

Such a policy would favour small farmers and crofters producing for local and regional markets rather than giant agri-businesses that produce for export.

Standing up for rural Scotland: A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Work with organisations like Via Campesina - an international umbrella movement of peasant organisations, small and middle-scale producers, agricultural workers, and indigenous communities from Asia, Africa, America, and Europe - to challenge the

The CAP is also designed to exclude poor Third World farmers from European markets, while allowing European producers to dump foodstuffs and tobacco on the most impoverished countries of Africa and Asia.

power of agri-business in Europe.

- Fight to replace the Common Agricultural Policy with a scheme that shifts the balance of farming subsidies decisively in favour of subsistence farmers, crofters, organic farmers and other local producers.
- Back moves to reintroduce of veterinary borders within Europe and end the import and export of live animals.
- Introduce a European-wide ban on the growth or sale of GM crops.

EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDING

The European Union provides four structural funds that are supposed to address social and economic inequalities. Scotland will receive £1 billion of structural funding between 2000 and 2006. On the face of it, that appears a generous settlement. Yet other regions, even within the UK, have managed to secure a better deal. The North West of England, for example, will receive almost £1.4 billion.

Wales, with just 2 million fewer inhabitants than Scotland, will also receive almost 50 per cent more than Scotland. Moreover, Wales' funding has more than tripled since the last allocation, covering the six-year period 1994-1999, from £395 million to £1.4 billion. Over the same period, Scotland's funding from Europe has remained at a standstill.

No socialist would grudge the depressed regions of West Wales and the Valleys special funding. But it is an

indictment of Scotland's politicians and of the unaccountable decision making of Brussels and Westminster that Scotland should lag so far behind.

Scotland is one of the most peripheral regions of Europe, with a scattered population including 100,000 islanders. It also includes the poverty capital of northern Europe, Glasgow, where life expectancy is lower than on the Palestinian West Bank.

Yet, while regions like Merseyside, Cornwall, South Yorkshire and West Wales and the Valleys have been awarded Objective One Status, entitling them to massive extra funding, Glasgow is excluded. That's because it has not been classified as a region – even though its population is substantially larger than that of Cornwall.

Standing up for Scotland: A Scottish Socialist MEP will:

- Fight to redraw the arbitrary regional boundaries and criteria for Objective One Status, so that Glasgow should be included.
- Campaign for structural funds to be allocated to the provision of a Road Equivalent Tariff scheme, so that ferry journeys to and from Scotland's islands cost no more than the equivalent by road.
- Ensure that all European funding spent in Scotland is open and transparent.
- Fight to ensure that funding goes to those areas and communities which are most disadvantaged, rather than squandered on high profile prestige projects.



Photo credit: Duncan Brown

Scotland is one of the most peripheral regions of Europe, with a scattered population including 100,000 islanders. It also includes the poverty capital of northern Europe, where life expectancy is lower than on the Palestinian West Bank.

Standards and conduct

In common with the Scottish Socialist group of MSPs, any SSP MEPs would be expected to:

- Live on no more than the average salary of a skilled Scottish worker, adjusted if necessary to take into account any extra costs associated with living part-time in Brussels and Strasbourg.
- Fully disclose all additional expenses received from the European Parliament (for example, travel, accommodation and staffing).
- Disclose details of any outside activities for which payment has been made – for example, TV appearances or payments from journalism.
- Provide a monthly report of their activities for publication in the Scottish Socialist Voice.
- Build links with trade unionists, environmental campaigners, peace activists, and those resisting national oppression across Europe and worldwide.
- Consult with the party executive and parliamentary committee (or a representative of these bodies) over any major political decisions that are not already covered in party manifestos and conference resolutions.
- Stand down in the event of a vote of no confidence by an SSP conference or national council.

- Open up public offices in key locations and hold regular public consultation meetings across Scotland.

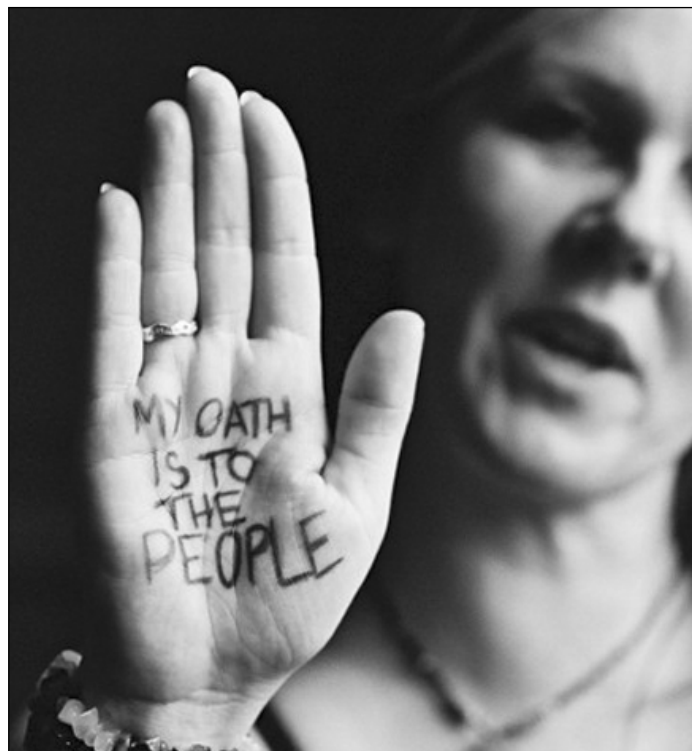


Photo credit: Craig MacLean

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Another Europe is possible

The Scottish Socialist Party believes that the European Union and its existing institutions can at best be only marginally improved. But there are limits.

Trying to transform the European Union into a vehicle for social justice is like trying to sail across the Atlantic on a double decker bus.

A genuinely democratic and social Europe cannot be built without dismantling the existing structures of the European Union and rebuilding the whole edifice from scratch.

In the meantime, we will fight for genuine freedom and sovereignty for the people of Scotland.

We do not hide our aim of building a Scottish socialist republic which will remove nuclear submarines from the Clyde, redistribute wealth, end low pay and poverty, restore trade union rights, reverse privatisation and use the £30 million a day profits from North Sea oil

A future Scottish Socialist government would act completely independently of the Bank of England and the European Central Bank, of Westminster and Strasbourg, of Whitehall and Brussels.

to develop public services that will surpass those of Scandinavia.

But such a programme could never be carried out without complete independence from London and Brussels.

A SOCIALIST SCOTLAND IN A SOCIAL EUROPE

A future Scottish Socialist government would act completely independently of the Bank of England and the European Central Bank, of Westminster and Strasbourg, of Whitehall and Brussels.

At the same time, it would issue an appeal to the peoples of Europe, over the heads of the EU and national governments, for a different Europe – a commonwealth of independent states based on social priorities.

As a first step in that direction, we would propose a congress of the peoples of Europe, to be elected by ballot, country by country. This congress would then have the task of drawing up a draft constitution, which would then be voted upon country by country. The new constitution would set out new arrangements, addressing the following questions:

- **Which powers would be shared and which retained at national level?**
- **How would any new all-European institutions be accountable to the people?**

● **What would be the basic social and economic principles underpinning a new Europe?**

A Scottish Socialist government would work with progressive forces across Europe, including trade unions, the European Social Forum and left parties, to develop a common political framework for a social Europe. This would be based on criteria that aimed to level up the quality of life rather than reduce standards down to the lowest common denominator. As a starting point we would propose the following criteria:

- A continent-wide minimum wage set at the equivalent of £7.50 in today's money.
- A continent-wide minimum state pension set at the equivalent of £200 a week in today's money.
- A continent-wide minimum level of corporate and top rate income tax, set at around 60 per cent.
- A continent-wide 30-hour basic working week, with all additional hours paid at overtime rates.
- A 'Tobin Tax' on all cross-border financial transactions.
- The removal of all nuclear weapons from European soil, the closure of NATO and the abandonment of any plans to develop European defence policy.
- The creation of a new voluntary zone of monetary union based on common social rights, workplace rights and environmental standards.
- The right of veto by all affiliated states on vital decisions.
- The cancellation of all Third World debts to Europe.
- The tearing up of the Schengen Agreement in favour of an open Europe in which refugees fleeing persecution and destitution would be made welcome.
- Complete openness and transparency, with all negotiations and deliberations

to be held in public.

- All voting to be conducted out in the open, with all minutes and records of meetings to be publicly available on the internet.
- An absolute guarantee of the right of all employees to join trade unions and take strike action.
- A new agricultural policy based on local production for local markets.



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Conclusion

The Scottish Socialist Party has selected a list of candidates which reflect Scotland's geographical diversity and which includes three men and four women.

Because the election is conducted by proportional representation, the SSP has a strong chance of winning one of Scotland's seven seats.

That would mean sending **No 1** on the SSP list, **FELICITY GARVIE**, to Brussels. Felicity is currently office manager and parliamentary assistant to **Tommy Sheridan** and **Rosie Kane**.

She is 49 years old and lives in Scotlandwell, a small village in rural Kinross. Living in the countryside while working in Edinburgh for two Glasgow-based MSPs, Felicity understands the geographical diversity of Scotland.

She has been heavily involved in developing and promoting the SSP's universal free school meals bill and the party's policy of replacing the Council Tax with a fair income-based tax system.

Felicity is also tuned into the crisis facing Scotland's farming and fishing communities. And as someone who lived in Germany for 20 years and speaks Ger-

man, French and Italian, she will be a highly and effective voice of Scotland within Europe.

The other six SSP candidates on the list are:

No 2: Nick McKerrell, from Glasgow. Nick is a lecturer in law at Caledonia University and first became involved in socialist politics helping to organise opposition to Thatcher's Poll Tax.

No 3: Hugh Kerr from North Berwick. Hugh was a Labour MEP from 1994 to 1999 and acted as Tommy Sheridan's press officer from 1999 to 2004.

No 4: Catriona Grant from Edinburgh. Catriona is a criminal justice social worker with Edinburgh City Council and an active member of her trade union UNISON.

No 5: Lynn Sheridan from Lanarkshire is the sister of Tommy. She is also an activist in the trade union UNISON and has been especially involved in promoting the cause of gay rights.

No 6: John Sangster from Inverurie in Aberdeenshire has been heavily involved in the campaign to save Scotland's fishing communities.

No 7: Andy Rossetter from Fort William was a long standing SNP activist before leaving to help build the socialist pro-independence party, the SSP.

The Scottish Socialist Party is already one of the strongest anti-capitalist, pro-socialist parties in the whole of Europe. A breakthrough into the European Parliament would be another momentous milestone in the journey towards a democratic, socialist, independent Scotland.

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We do not claim that a single Scottish Socialist MEP in Brussels will itself

transform Europe for the better. But if the SSP succeeds in storming the citadels of European power on June 10, that victory will be celebrated in cities across Europe by those campaigning for peace campaigners, anti-poverty groups, anti-racists, national minorities, and anti-globalisation protesters.

But most important of all, a Scottish Socialist MEP will allow the voice of Scotland's ordinary working people to be heard in Europe.

In recent years the SSP has championed the cause of pensioners, firefighters, fishermen, nursery nurses, railworkers, hospital ancillary workers, medical secretaries, call centre workers, students, civil servants and others fighting back against low pay, redundancy and poverty.

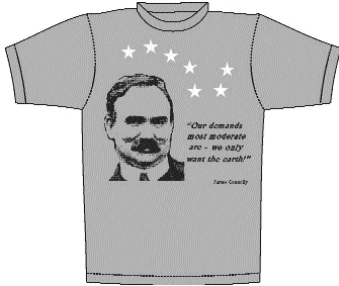
We have fought side by side with communities resisting hospital closures, school closures and other attacks on local community facilities. We have stood up for Scotland's young people when they have been slandered and denigrated by government ministers. We have assisted those fleeing persecution and famine abroad.

Now we're asking you to support us by voting for the Scottish Socialist Party in the European elections on June 10. Better still, become a member of the Scottish Socialist Party, the party of the future.



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