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by Ken Ferguson, editor,
Scottish Socialist Voice

THE DOOR IS OPENING TO A SCOTLAND OF REAL CHANGE

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

DESPITE INSTALLING supposed street fighter Jim Murphy as leader, the peoples party's slide continues.

As we report elsewhere in this *Voice* the detailed polling carried out by Tory peer Lord Ashcroft confirms what now looks like a trend showing the once dominant Labour Party staring into an abyss with large scale losses among their current Westminster MPs.

What started as a membership surge for the pro-indy SSP, Greens and, spectacularly, the SNP, increasingly looks like a watershed moment in Scottish political history in which the political landscape could change totally and permanently.

Optimism

At the heart of this stunning development lies not just the fact that there is widespread disgust with Labour's role in the fearmongering No campaign—particularly their alliance with the Tories—but that tens of thousands of Scots learned to hope for something better during the Yes campaign.

That optimism was born out of a mass democratic movement in real dialogue not on the braying benches of Westminster but in village halls, demonstrations, social media, in parties and outside parties and



PRIORITY: win the fullest democratic power and apply it to meeting people's needs over the interests of the profiteering minority

a galaxy of other ways.

The problem for the largely identikit Westminster politicians is that they don't do optimism and change as they see themselves as managers of the system which, increasingly, people recognise offers no real answer to their problems and no serious change. It is this spirit of

optimism which, after the No vote, rather than defeat and despondency produced a surge of energy not just to carry on the indy battle but to press for the type of changes such as an end to austerity, scrapping Trident's terror weapons, decent homes and jobs for all which make the Westminster suits run a mile.

For the May general election those seeking increased democracy to deliver serious social change are rejecting the New Labour in a kilt on offer from Murphy and moving in huge numbers towards the SNP.

Clearly a defeat for Labour with its pro-austerity and Trident renewal politics wrapped in anti-immigration and benefit claimant bashing rhetoric will cause few tears to any serious socialist.

Indeed as with their allies in Greece, the humiliated PASOK,

Labour dance to the bankers tune and offer only crumbs for their traditional base. The SNP has, at least for now, become the chosen vehicle for many thousands who once shared a Labour vision, reject both Westminster rule and austerity and look to the SNP to deliver some of that change. Although challenging, neither the Greens or SSP are likely to win any MPs.

After May, whoever forms the UK government, it can safely be predicted that Scotland will remain restless for change and face a government committed to continuing cuts and austerity, possible EU exit and almost certainly Trident renewal.

Outlaw poverty pay

It remains to be seen whether a large SNP group would succeed in wringing concessions from a Miliband minority or what it could do to stay the extremism of a Tory minority backed by UKIP.

As before the indyref the best path for the Scottish left is to fight for the maximum possible powers for Holyrood and to fashion a politics that uses those powers in the interests of both people and planet.

This means the devolution—as per the Vow—of powers over everything short of foreign affairs and defence and then outlawing poverty pay, implementing a £10 minimum wage, extending public ownership of railways and energy, building modern homes for rent and ending the scandal of fuel poverty.

The list is long, the tasks are many but the priority must be to win the fullest democratic power and apply it to meeting people's needs over the interests of the profiteering minority.

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by Colin Fox, SSP
national co-spokesperson

Voters demand more powers - polls predict Labour meltdown

AS A Tory, Lord Ashcroft has every interest in undermining Labour's morale ahead of May's General Election. Yet his latest poll of 16 Scottish seats—14 of them Labour strongholds in the West of Scotland—suggesting Labour faces annihilation at the hands of the SNP merely confirms the conclusions reached by all the others conducted over the past few months.

Labour in Scotland would be reduced to just six seats concludes Ashdown. They currently have 40. These figures destroy Ed Miliband's hopes of victory on 7 May. Such a steep decline in support for Labour in Scotland would be unprecedented. Electorally this country used to resemble a one party state.

Unlike the Chinese Communist Party say Labour faces a rout. Few predicted such a collapse last September when Labour's 'Better Together' pact with the Tories and Lib Dems triumphed in the referendum.

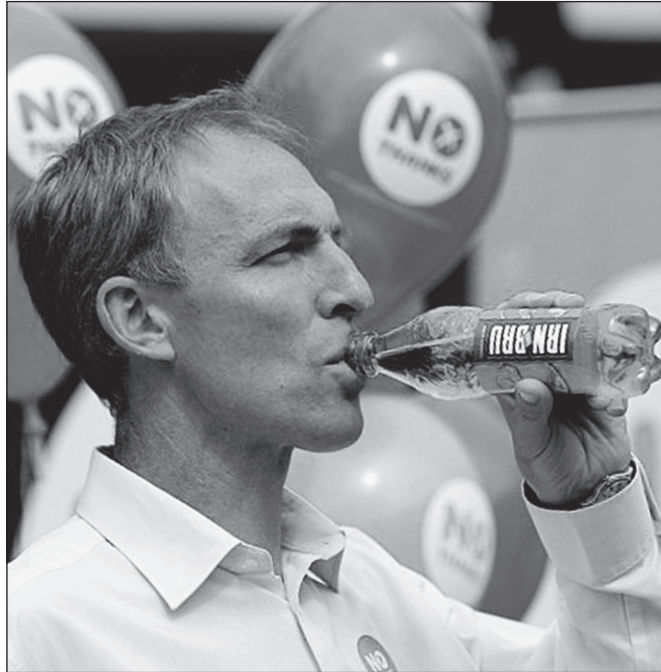
Lethal 'success'

Many in the Labour Party hold Tony Blair responsible for their decline. And this is ironic since he was the party's most successful leader winning three General Elections in a row.

But the price of his 'success' has proved lethal for Labour. And the root of the problem is that Blair famously decreed there was no place for 'ideology' in modern politics.

There were therefore no values he would not abandon to get elected. He dumped Clause 4 Part 4 of Labour's Constitution, its totemic commitment to the redistribution of wealth.

He abandoned the party's opposition to Thatcherism with its privatisation of public services, its assault on trade unionism and its encouragement of corporate greed. Above all of course it will be Blair's lies over the illegal war in Iraq that will define



BRU-HA-HA: Jim Murphy swallows his pride before campaigning

him historically. And instead of leading calls for Blair to be indicted to face war crimes at The Hague, Scottish Labour elected his mouthpiece Jim Murphy as its new leader. Talk about having a death wish?

Labour's imminent electoral catastrophe lies, according to the country's leading psephologist Professor John Curtice of Strathclyde University, above all in the fact that No and Yes voters from last year's referendum have joined forces to back the SNP because they want more powers for the Holyrood Parliament and they do not trust Labour to deliver them.

That issue is dominant in the eyes of the electorate conclude the pollsters. Fear of another Tory win at Westminster are real because of Ed Miliband's chronically poor performance and his programmatic insistence on continuing with the Tories austerity strategy. Labour's sophistry over supporting extra powers for Holyrood has been roundly ex-

posed. Their proposals to the dismal Smith Commission were the weakest of all the parties and the electorate have detected the game Labour is playing.

A No vote in September was supposed to stop the Tories from governing Scotland again from afar. It was also supposed to relieve the pressure on working class families who have seen their living standards fall by £50/week since 2008. It was supposed to reverse widening inequalities and shake the City of London out of its indifference to Scotland's needs.

Instead Labour's 'Vow' to deliver significant extra powers is seen for the opportunist device it was. Labour is considered to be untrustworthy on delivering extra powers for Holyrood. The SNP are therefore on course to benefit from disillusioned Labour and Lib Dem voters.

And the implications of all this for the Scottish Socialist Party are that we need to remind voters of our own submission to

the Smith Commission where we spelt out our commitment to extra powers for Holyrood.

Although we re-iterated our support for an independent socialist Scotland, a modern democratic republic, we respect the decision reached by the people of Scotland on 18 September.

If independence is not therefore imminently achievable we favour 'Devo Max' where all powers short of Foreign Affairs and Defence are devolved to Edinburgh.

MSPs could then introduce a £10/hour living wage in Scotland and end zero hour contracts. Similarly devolving power over Employment law would mean we could rescind the worst anti-union legislation in Europe and establish a level playing field between employers and employees.

We could also ensure that the 1971 Equal Pay Act that guarantees women the same wages and conditions as their male counterparts for work of equal value could be at last implemented.

We could also introduce, after democratic consultation with the people of Scotland, a written Constitution with a commitment to widening democratic participation and achieving our modern, democratic republic.

Get involved

This is the message the SSP will present in our General Election campaigns in Edinburgh South, Glasgow East, Glasgow South West and Paisley. And we intend to deliver it with enthusiasm and precision throughout the next few weeks until 7 May.

All SSP members and supporters are strongly encouraged to get involved in our campaign. Building Scotland's Socialist Party is more important than ever.

by Sandra Webster, SSP
national co-spokesperson

INDEPENDENT WOMEN

ONE OF the greatest strengths of the Yes campaign was a positive vision of a different kind of politics. One where more voices could be encouraged to speak and most importantly be listened too.

Now on the other side where the losers have become the winners, we need not to put this aside but continue to ensure that we listen to those who ask for our support.

Last week Women for Independence drew up a five point plan of behaviour they asked us to support in the General Election and some women from the party drew up a response. This response did not belong to any individual but to the women who participated and indeed to all the women in the wider party. It will be a challenge but it is our responsibility as individuals and as a party to ensure women feel they can be heard and most importantly listened to.

New perspective

Many women in our party are members or supporters of Women for Independence as well as being active in their own branches. This has brought depth and a new perspective to our branch discussions. We are a bottom-up party so this new energy should be seen at Executive Committee level.

We have a 50/50 EC membership which is much more encouraging than the two women who were members last year. We live in a patriarchal society though and there are many barriers which impact on women's participation at all levels in the party. Caring responsibilities for example may mean women are unable to attend weekend and evening meetings. We as a party should be more flexible and create times and spaces that are easier for women to access.

Language is important too. Both in the virtual and real world and that we address each other appropriately and with respect. It is too easy to have a culture develop that we are not aware impacts on others. Gender balance

on platforms is crucial too. The only way women will become more confident in speaking in public is by practice and support from male comrades.

This is perhaps the greatest support we can have support from comrades and a place we can meet which is where the women's network will come into its own.

One of the particular issues that the women who co-authored our statement wanted to emphasise is our mission to reach out especially to working class women. Women and those they care for are disproportionately affected by austerity.

As an anti austerity party any action we have such as the implementation of school meals, free prescriptions will benefit men and

women too. We have to continue to speak up against austerity to make a difference to all our lives.

Women For Indy were involved in a campaign which caused the Scottish Government to think again about building a new women's "super prison" at Greenock. Imagine if they could campaign for carers rights.

Hungry for change

Could they help prevent the day centre closures in Glasgow? Women's issues are not only ours, they affect us all. We have so many new women in our party who are hungry for change. I applaud them and also all the women who have been in the party in difficult times. You have made a difference with

all your efforts and hard work. Your voices must still continue to be at the heart of our politics.

Women are the heartbeat of our party. Tackling inequality will create a kinder fairer society for us all.

We in the SSP do not want the battle to stop after independence that is only the beginning. We can start with supporting more women to become active in the party.

Below is our response to Women for Independence, our code of practice for the forthcoming General Elections. We may only have one women out of the few candidates we are fielding but at the last EC it was recognised women should be at the centre of the campaigning. I know you will recognise your role in this.

Further representation needed

SSP response to Women for Independence's five point pledge

WE WELCOME the petition of Women for Independence on how the election campaign should be conducted. We will only be fielding a small number of candidates where local branches have made the decision to stand. As a party we are proud that for the first time in a few years we have a 50/50 EC and a male and female co-spokesperson and co-chair. We recognise this is only the beginning though.

Many women in the party were very active inside the Women for Indy campaign and found their voices. Some of us are also in the newly formed Women for Independence local group. We also have a large number of women activists who have been inspirational in their values and their feminist ideals and most of all their energy to make a difference in local communities.

We acknowledge that at the General Election women should receive further representation.

At our last Executive Council it was recognised that although we only have one female candidate, (myself Sandra Webster), women should be central and at the front of all our campaigning. This will mean we will strive to ensure women are represented on every election platform.

Electioneering can resort into name-calling especially with the enhanced role of social media and we will ensure our social media team when using our twitter, Facebook and other apps will

ensure that no-one feels threatened or uses discriminatory language. If so it will be managed so it will not occur again. If we make mistakes we promise we will learn from them. In all our campaigns we will strive to support women on the many issues that affect them.

Especially working class women as we live in these communities and understand the real impact of austerity and how it is especially impacting on the lives of women. We acknowledge we are not perfect, we will make mistakes especially as we have so many new members.

We thank Women for Independence for drawing up this statement which highlights the barriers women experience in society. We look forward to being members of, and working alongside you as we strive for more equality. We are especially committed to campaigning for the issues that especially impact on working class women.

We recognise that class leads to an unequal society and we will always continue to reach out to women where they are in their local communities. Tackling austerity will change all our lives. Women and those they care for are first in the firing line of the cuts, tackling inequality means recognising this and bringing about real change in women's life. Thanks for challenging us.

This statement was agreed by a number of us all of whom are active in the party and some of whom have been involved in Women for Indy. The statement is only the beginning of a process that can transform politics.

by Jonathon Shafi,
*Radical Independence
Campaign*

Hope is coming - Scotland's left needs to be part of it

HOPE HAS returned to Europe. After years of brutal austerity measures, the people of Greece have delivered a body blow to the bankers and technocrats.

The Syriza victory is then is not just a victory for the movement in Greece, but for people fighting for a social alternative to austerity internationally. Days after the election of Syriza, social reforms were enacted. Alongside immediate domestic changes, Syriza also stated its plan to give a 'gift to Europe' by vetoing, and thereby derailing, the corporate stitch up that is TTIP.

In the week that followed, the rebellion taking place in the European south spread to Spain, where a Podemos rally saw over two hundred thousand people in attendance.

Podemos are looking to win the Spanish elections later in the year. This of course will be difficult, but the point is that in Spain the radical left are aiming to take power. Things are changing—in favour of the left—and fast.

Anti-austerity front

Syriza and Podemos have opened up an anti-austerity front in Europe. In these countries the austerity agenda has been particularly harsh.

From mass youth unemployment to struggling to get the basics to survive (300,000 household in Greece have been cut off from electricity supply), the people have been through an exhausting period of harsh and unjust rapidly declining living standards.

Of course, the rich have done very well from these circumstances, capitalising on a downward market to make



JONATHON SHAFI:
'In the longer term, the
radical left should be
looking to form the official
opposition to the SNP'

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

even more money than they were before 2008.

Despite there being distinctive circumstances, and different political histories in Greece and Spain which have led to particular forms of resistance, the ideas of the radical left are at a premium across Western Europe as well.

The collapse of social democracy and the nature of the neoliberal consensus has led to a questioning not only of austerity, but of the system that breeds the mass inequality and the privatisation of the goods and services we rely on.

As the system creaks under multiple crises- economic, political, and institutional—there is a huge opportunity for a left to put forward a socialist agenda for radical social change.

Here in Scotland, the ideas of the left were central to the

referendum, a credit to forces like the Radical Independence Campaign and the SSP.

We put class, austerity, imperialism and corporate power at the centre of the debate. As a result of this and the association with a Yes vote and social progress, the Labour party have seen the rapid erosion of their electoral base.

The vast bulk of this has gone to the SNP. The reality though, is that the SNP is in essence a social-neoliberal party, with a highly centralistic mode of organisation.

That is not to say that there are not thousands of leftists and socialists who have joined, and a continuing and respectful dialogue and debate around this issue is necessary.

But with Labour in disarray, the best way to pull Scottish politics to the left electorally, is the presentation of a mass

alternative to neoliberalism at the 2016 elections.

The Left Project is an attempt to open a discussion about how we can best coordinate a mass campaign to win socialist representation in the parliament which can work hand in hand with social movements and community struggles.

In the longer term, the radical left should be looking to form the official opposition to the SNP, but the steps we take now will be vitally important for the future.

Hope is coming. That is the slogan of Syriza, and the mood which is permeating the resistance to austerity as a result of their win. We live in an era where the ideas of the powerful are becoming decoupled from peoples lived experiences.

Radical forces

The richest 1 per cent now own more than 50 per cent of the world's wealth. This situation cannot hold, and more and more people are beginning to realise it.

The solutions to the multitude of crises currently gripping the world are tied up with a necessary opposition to the system which produces them in the first place.

Our solidarity with those who are successfully building a challenge is not a one way process, because only a truly internationalised array of radical forces can bring about the positive changes we want to see.

In that sense, while we cannot create carbon copies of Syriza, we must work in the spirit of Syriza as we move forward.

by *Richie Venton,*
SSP national workplace
organiser

THERE'S A stink of corruption arising from the body of capitalism. The world's second-biggest bank, HSBC, has hit the headlines for providing a tax-dodging service to some of the world's biggest corporations, richest capitalists, and most corrupt crooks.

The public, and public services, have been deprived of £billions in unpaid taxes, in a conscious campaign of swindling on an industrial scale, thereby adding to the savage cuts to wages, benefits, services and the lives of millions.

However, HSBC is but one link in the chain of corruption and graft known as capitalism, the system where those in power think all is fair in looting and profiteering. Back in 2007, whistleblower Herve Falciani

facts from public view up until now, not even 'naming and shaming' the con-merchants involved, let alone prosecuting them.

HMRC was handed the leaked documents in 2010, if not earlier. These revealed 7,000 UK citizens who had systematically evaded taxes with the active advice and involvement of HSBC's Swiss operation.

Five years on, all the authorities have done is a series of shady out-of-court deals—this week boasting(!) they have recovered £135million in taxes, interest charges and fines—with a sum total of ONE unnamed individual prosecuted.

Contrast that with the relentless prosecution—and indeed persecution—of those who falsely claim a few hundred pounds in benefits; it says it all about the class-ridden society we live in. One stark statistic

cash at cashpoints abroad. For instance, Richard Caring, British tycoon and owner of the celebrity-packed Ivy restaurant in London, on one day in 2005 thus removed £2.25million in cash in Switzerland—dodging his tax duties in the UK.

In Geneva, HSBC handed out 'bricks' of \$100,000 a time, no questions asked, to American surgeon Andrew Silva, so he could then illegally post the cash back to the USA.

Tory silence bought

Hollywood stars, royalty and heirs to some of Europe's biggest fortunes are on the HSBC list of criminal tax-dodgers. And only one of the 7,000 British citizens implicated in holding an estimated \$21.7billion in HSBC's Swiss vaults has been prosecuted!

But don't be fooled by the huffing and puffing of David

of these leeches on society, since the HSBC revelations in 2007. And the plot thickens.

Stephen Green was chief executive of HSBC from 2003-2006, then chairman from 2006-2010. He wrote books on "reconciling God and Mammon", in his mission as an evangelical Christian who portrayed himself as a saint in sinful times.

He was then made a Tory Lord. Cameron begged and cajoled the saintly Lord to become a government Minister during a trade mission to India in July 2010—a clear three months after Cameron's government had received the leaked documents on the very 'sinful' deeds of Green's HSBC.

Lord Green was appointed Minister for Trade and Investment, from January 2011 until December 2013.

"To him that hath, more shall be given, tax-free!"

CAPITALIST CORRUPTION

leaked acres of documents showing how around 130,000 of the globe's wealthiest people, in 203 different countries, were systematically shown how to dodge taxes by the Swiss arm of HSBC.

In France, Argentina, Belgium and the USA these revelations have led to criminal investigations, such is the clamour for action against the bankers and capitalists who brought the world economy to the brink of ruin in the 2008 financial crisis.

Tax-dodging

But in Britain, the self-proclaimed mother of democracy, where HSBC is actually based, a monumental cover-up of criminal tax-dodging has been conducted.

Not only the perpetrators at the tops of the banks, but also the heads of HMRC and the Westminster government have been up to their elbows in burying the

captures the values of capitalist government in the UK: HMRC employs a mere 300 staff pursuing tax evasion by the fabulously rich and big corporations, whilst they have 3,250 staff in pursuit of benefit fraud, even though the latter only amounts to less than 1 per cent of the money lost to the state by corporate and fat cat tax fraud!

One of the chief means of dodging taxation is through offshore tax havens. As the BBC blithely states, "tax avoidance is perfectly legal, deliberately hiding money to evade tax is not". But that's precisely what HSBC has helped its rich clients do.

They help advise rich clients on how to stay ahead of the law, such as how to dodge the impact of the European Savings Directive of 2005.

They supply wealthy clients with a foreign credit card so they can withdraw their undeclared

Cameron about clamping down on those embroiled in tax evasion through offshore accounts. For the past five years, the rich have bought the silence of the government on this scandal. When 500 mind-bogglingly rich donors to the Tory party gathered in London's Grosvenor House hotel this week at the annual 'Black and White Ball', forking out £15,000 a head for dinner to raise Tory party election funds, it was money well spent. They were there to buy the next government!

At last year's event, the 570 assembled worthies were 'worth' a combined £22billion in personal wealth. This year's crowd of parasites are likely to be in possession of even more; after all, Cameron and Osborne cut the top personal tax rate on incomes over £150,000 by 5 per cent since April 2013.

More significant still, they've kept quiet about the tax swindling

The growth industry that is tax-dodging for the ultra-rich is not the sole preserve of one rogue bank, HSBC. On the contrary, they are a small point on the tip of a monumental iceberg.

Some experts estimate a quarter of the world's wealth is held in offshore accounts, purely to avoid paying domestic business and income taxes. And over two-thirds of that is in British territories.

Four huge accountancy firms in the UK make a fortune for themselves and their capitalist clients by giving them expert advice on how to avoid and evade tax.

One of them, Price Waterhouse Cooper, has promoted this swindle on an industrial scale, amassing a fortune for its owners in the process. They've just rewarded their executive board members with payouts of over £21million—an average £1.83million each. Legalised crime pays!

These accountancy firms are



RULE OF THE RICH: Cameron and Osborne cut the top personal tax rate on incomes over £150,000 by 5 per cent since April 2013

IN BREADLINE BRITAIN

stuffed full of former top brass tax inspectors from HMRC, and the government hires the services of their representatives to help frame tax laws—which they help shape to suit the rich. And the accountancy firms then make money out of advising the rich on how to escape taxes...through loopholes they helped to devise in the first place!

It's not a case of a few rotten apples in the barrel, but of a system that is rotten and class-ridden to its core.

Whilst the pro-capitalist politicians try to distract our attention from this systemic corruption by chastising a few individuals that get caught red-handed, the latest figures on poverty and inequality reveal the consequences, but get little publicity.

Twenty million people in Britain are now below the breadline! Poverty has doubled since 1983. 3.5 million adults

go hungry to feed their children. And an absolute majority of those in poverty—52 per cent—are in work.

Whilst the wealthiest 1,000 people have seen their obscene wealth virtually double in the last five years, to £519billion, workers' wages have dropped by £50 a week over the same period.

Demand £10/hour

We're told the SSP's demand for a living minimum wage of £10 an hour for all over 16 is 'unrealistic'. But the people preaching this are the ones who have systematically, consciously robbed society of £billions, not only through dodging taxes and buying politicians to keep taxes on big business and the rich at historic low levels, but through the entire system of profit itself.

In reply, the TUC needs to speak out in support of its own unanimously agreed policy of a

£10 national minimum wage, and give a lead in demanding closure of the tax loopholes that help engorge the rich, and confiscation of the assets of companies and individuals found to have dodged taxes.

Decent wages, expanded public services and new green industry jobs could all be easily funded if the rich were forced to pay proper taxes and the current annual loss of £120billion from tax avoidance, evasion and non-payment was halted.

The jaw-dropping mountains of wealth accumulated by the richest 1 per cent—in part through this monstrous international tax swindle—needs to be redistributed, with a wealth tax and vastly increased levels of Corporation Tax.

Why should the banks, accountancy firms, manufacturing and service industry multinationals have the ability to amass vast

profits, dividends and bonuses for the owners and directors in the first place—regardless of whether they fancy paying the taxes they are meant to, or not?

This stinking corruption should embolden those of us who think the wealth created by the collective efforts of working people should be collectively owned, through measures such as democratic public ownership of the banks, big business and natural resources.

Need before greed

That way, the one in three people in Britain below the breadline could be raised to a life of plenty, with socially useful jobs created and decent wages for all, including the guaranteed minimum of £10 an hour. Capitalism means exploitation to create profits for the very few. Socialism opens the way to society putting people's need before the rich's greed.

Roz Paterson reports

GM salmon to be let loose

Q: WHEN is a fish not a fish?
A: When it's a commodity.

OK, not exactly side-splitting, but then the introduction of Genetically Engineered (GE) salmon into the human food chain is no laughing matter either.

Some time soon, the first GE fish—the AquaAdvantage Salmon—will go into production, with unimaginable consequences for wildlife, the marine environment, and human health.

Unimaginable, I say, because the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), who have allowed this curious morsel to slip through the net, has regarded it in the light of—not a food for consumption—but a veterinary drug.

Thus, it has been passed as having “no significant impact” on health.

Those who adversely commented during the consultation period—know-nothings like fishermen, consumer safety advocates, ecologists, that sort of thing—are dismayed that AquaAdvantage could pass muster with so little scrutiny.

We don't really know if GE food is good, bad or indifferent for our health, but we do know that it is damaging to the natural environment, and no amount of corporate greenwash, more of which later, will change that.

'Best invention'

But to return to the drawing board, let us first consider what an AquaAdvantage Salmon actually is. Dubbed, eerily enough, one of the best inventions of 2010 by *Time* magazine, the AquaAdvantage Salmon comprises 40,000 genes from your traditional Atlantic Salmon, spliced with a growth-hormone regulator from the rarer Pacific Ocean Chinook Salmon, plus a promoter from the eel-like ocean Pout.

The point being that this new biotech wonder grows at 11 times

the rate of an ordinary salmon, reaching maturity at 18 months, as opposed to three years, as it can grow all year round, rather than just in spring and summer.

As such, it marks a significant leap for the biotech industry, from sorry old vegetables to actual living, breathing animals. It is, they claim, the answer to the ecological disaster that is our over-fished seas. If we take this technology to its logical conclusion, we can leave the seas in peace and just grow fish in the lab!

Plus, we can feed everyone, the poor, the hungry, the Omega-3 oil deficient, on the cheap! Plus, these little biotech babies, because they grow up so fast, won't need half as much food as the real, swimming-in-the-sea variety, making them real eco treasures!

Before we cut

through this corporate crap, let's be clear on one thing. AquaBounty Technologies, who 'owns' the right to produce these GE wonders, is not a charitable organisation dedicated to the elimination of poverty and the protection of marine habitats. It is your common-or-garden, rapaciously greedy capitalist outfit, primed for profit-making...and nothing else.

For AquaBounty, fish are a commodity, like salt or Hello Kitty pencil cases; not living creatures, inextricably linked to every other species on earth.

Sure, the idea of growing fish in a lab sounds like it leaves the seas in peace, but it so totally doesn't. For one thing, these fish need fed, and being turbo-charged growers, they need fed a lot. And they need fed fish protein. And that comes from the sea.

Which means the mass-produc-

tion of GE salmon requires more, not less, fishing of our over-fished marine environment. Furthermore, if they can make money from AquaAdvantage, they will grow lots and lots of AquaAdvantage, which means...you get it.

As for feeding the poor, the hungry and so on...you're unlikely to see AquaBounty giving this stuff out for free at food banks. That is not why they are developing GE salmon.

There are other issues, relating to the bit where human life overlaps with the natural environment. Increasingly, we are becoming reacquainted with the fact that our lives and the natural world are intertwined. That our activ-

ities impact on the world around us, and the world around us pays us back.

To say that GE salmon has “no significant impact” is to ignore this truth. For instance, although AquaBounty insist it won't happen, there is every possibility that some of these GE salmon will escape into wider environment; they are, deep down, creatures of the wild, after all.

If and when this happens, the already threatened wild salmon population will find itself competing for food and habitat with a monster fish that is both bigger and stronger than it is, and which consumes much, much more food.

Which is hardly good news for wild salmon, or the marine habitat in which it lives, which needs every link in its elaborate chain to thrive. You can't simply wipe out one species and expect business as usual.

Karl Marx, who knew nothing of GE fish, but surely knew a thing

or two about economics, noted that capitalism produces profits because it doesn't pay the true cost of production, in terms of adequate wages to workers, and compensation for the use of natural resources.

Undoubtedly, the company in this case will pay the workers and for the fish protein, but will it be enough to compensate humanity for the loss of traditional fishing skills, understanding of the marine environment and the need for vigilant stewardship, as practised by indigenous coastal communities of previous centuries?

And will it be enough to compensate for the continued decimation of the world's fish stocks and the potential collapse of the wild salmon population?

Biotechnology is keen to position itself as the answer to our ecological woes. OK, they seem to say, we have made a little mess here, but we can clean it up, with new technology and clean, green ideas.

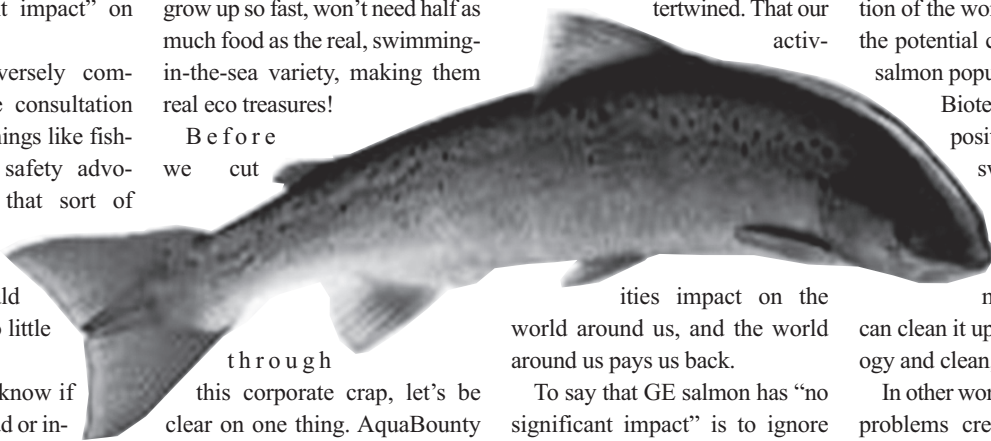
In other words, we can solve the problems created by over-consumption by creating different things to consume.

Marine sterility

It's not the way. Just as we shouldn't pin our hopes on spraying the sky with titanium oxide to reduce global warming, no more should we hold out for GE as the solution to failing crops, due to climate change, and land erosion, due to over-grazing, and marine sterility, due to over-fishing and increasing acidity.

Capitalist solutions are not solutions; they're just another cheap way to make money, and keep us hooked on the idea of buying our way out of trouble.

We need to curb our fishing habits, and nurture our environment, or we'll have nothing. Even GE fish can't eat money.



by Ken Ferguson, *Voice* editor, and Christine McVicar, *distribution organiser*

THE SCOTTISH *Socialist Voice* is the only socialist paper written, published and printed in Scotland and has, since 1996, both reported the news and played a significant role in mobilising activity in struggles such as the anti war movement, the Yes campaign and the ongoing anti austerity movement.

With the growth in SSP membership in the wake of the indyref we have also expanded the print run of the *Voice* to ensure that each and every branch of the party can receive supplies of the paper for sale as a key part of their activity.

This expansion is to be greatly welcomed but, as always, it also poses great challenges to those currently part of the team which both produces and, crucially, distributes the *Voice* to those party activists whose work in selling the paper is absolutely

EXPANDING SOCIALIST VOICE NEEDS YOUR INPUT

central to our work. That's why we are making this appeal to *Voice* readers and SSP members for your help with this work.

Specifically we are keen to meet comrades who would like to write for the *Voice* or help with the key task of distributing our paper to the growing and widely spread network of branches and ensure that the *Voice* is sold at both our own stalls but also at public events organised by all parts of the broad progressive movement.

Optimally the work of ensuring the *Voice* is available for sale would be best achieved by branches agreeing to appoint a *Voice* organiser who can be an easy point of contact on this key part of our work.

Alongside this we are



seeking comrades, in particular women, to help us expand our pool of writers in order to both broaden our coverage and increase the areas we are able to cover.

In particular we need to better reflect and report on the vibrant currents of youth and feminism on our pages and give serious coverage to developments among

Scotland's ethnic communities. The writing opportunities include news features on issues, reviews of event, films books etc or opinion pieces on current issues. Some comrades are understandably nervous about writing but we are happy to offer help and guidance in this process.

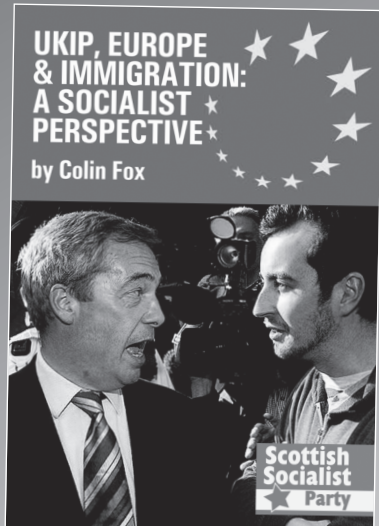
These are historic and exciting times for left politics, the ideas of socialism, equality and the future of the planet. The *Voice* has a key role in reporting and developing these debates and we hope you can help us do that.

• Please email Ken at: kenferguson864@gmail.com or Christine at: christinemcicar@gmail.com – alternatively, contact Jim McVicar on 07810 205747

The SSP's brand new pamphlet on UKIP, Europe and immigration by SSP co-spokesperson Colin Fox. Order your copy: scottishsocialistparty.tictail.com

Or send £5 (includes p&p) to:

Scottish Socialist Party, Suite 370, 4th Floor, Central Chambers, 93 Hope St, Glasgow G2 6LD. Please make cheques payable to 'Scottish Socialist Party'



Uni poll left victories

PHOTO: Rob Adair



WELL DONE to comrades Andrew Kinnell (pictured, second from the right) and Hollie Cameron (second left) who were both elected to Stirling University's Student Union. Andrew, running on a

leftist manifesto, won 65 per cent of the vote and will take up the helm as Union President in June. Hollie Cameron was elected Vice-President of Education following a very successful campaign.

Book review: *Eleanor Marx: A Life* by Rachel Holmes (Bloomsbury 2014, £25)

by Alex Miller

THIS NEW and very well-written biography tells the story of the life of Eleanor Marx (known to her family and friends as "Tussy").

Tussy was the third and youngest daughter of Karl and Jenny Marx, and the first part of the book deals with her childhood in London, and recounts her growing up in the financially insecure and often poverty-stricken Marx family home, where she rubbed shoulders with the likes of Friedrich Engels and William Liebknecht.

That part of the story is relatively well-known through the many biographies of Karl Marx that have been published over the years.

The story of Tussy's adult life is less well-known, and Rachel Holmes seeks to right this, with the first full-length biography of Tussy since the 1970s.

Tussy was in fact a remarkable woman in her own right, and although she had only four years of formal education, her home-schooling in the Marx household equipped her to make a number of very important contributions to the theory and practice of socialism.

Her first love was Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray who played an active part in the 1871 Paris

The remarkable Eleanor Marx

Commune and whose *History of the Commune* is still regarded by many as the definitive eyewitness account of the world's first working-class government and its brutal suppression. Tussy prepared the revised edition of the *History* for publication in the 1880s, and also published the first translation into English of Flaubert's great novel, *Madame Bovary*.

Tussy also helped organise the first performance in Britain of Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, in which she played the part of Nora Helmer (George Bernard Shaw also took part). Ibsen's work was a major inspiration for the feminist movement, and Holmes sees the essay 'The Woman Question: From a Socialist Point of View', which Tussy co-authored with her partner Edward Aveling, as constituting perhaps her greatest contribution to modern socialism.

Equal rights

Indeed, Holmes argues that the book deserves a place alongside famous works on gender and society such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and Engels's *The Origin of Private Property, Family and the State*.

Indeed "Eleanor Marx was the foremother of socialist fem-

inism: feminism began in the 1870s, not the 1970s". In *The Woman Question* Tussy argues that there can be no true feminism without socialism: while the demands for equal rights made by middle-class women should be supported, the predicament of working class women should be at the centre of any campaign for gender equality. As Holmes puts it: "Bourgeois women's re-

many contributions that Tussy made to the working-class cause, including the leading role that she played in organising a number of key trade-union struggles at the same time as she was contributing to her father's political legacy (for example, by assisting in the first translation into English of Capital and preparing Marx's famous pamphlet "Value, Price and Profit", which she found among her father's many chaotic manuscripts).

Painful confrontation

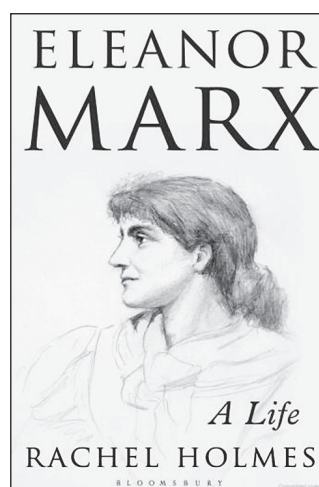
But her story ends in tragedy. Her partner Aveling was a genuine bad apple and regarded by Tussy's friends as repellent and untrustworthy. Financial impropriety appeared to follow in his footsteps wherever he went.

He married another woman behind Tussy's back, and Tussy's life came to an end in 1898 when she apparently committed suicide by taking prussic acid following a painful confrontation with Aveling.

Many of Tussy's friends—including Karl Kautsky and Edward Bernstein—suspected Aveling of murdering her in order to get his hands on the money Engels left to her when he died.

Holmes's book has some minor drawbacks: there could certainly be greater clarity about the distinction between Marxism and anarchism, for instance. Despite the occasional unclarity on matters of political theory, though, Holmes has produced a fine biography.

Eleanor Marx's life and work deserve greater recognition and this book deserves a wide readership. At the moment, it's only available as an expensive hardback, but a paperback edition is due to be published in May 2015.



sistance tended to be reactive—they challenged their men—whereas working women had to be radical and challenge the whole society".

However—and this is as important today as it was in the 1880s—"the struggle for women's emancipation and the equality of the sexes is a prerequisite for any effective form of progressive social revolution". So, not only can there be no true feminism without socialism, there can be no genuine socialism without feminism.

And it can't wait until the revolution, it has to be part of the process that leads to it: "emancipation from sexual oppression cannot be brought about only by legislation and through political organisation. From the socialist point of view, feminism has to begin in the family, home and community". The book details the



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by Bill Bonnar

British rulers back Saudi tyranny

ON 9 January, following the killing of journalists from the Charlie Hebdo magazine a huge demonstration took place in Paris to condemn the attacks, show solidarity and defend the principle of freedom of speech.

The attacks had been carried out by Islamic fundamentalist militants. Attending that day were the political leaders and heads of state from many countries including Britain, America and Israel.

On 23 January, following the death of the Islamic fundamentalist King Abdullah of Saudi many of these same leaders rushed to the funeral in Riyadh to show solidarity and pay their respects. In Paris they fell over themselves demonstrating outrage at such a flagrant attack on democracy; in Riyadh they fell over themselves in praise of a tyrant who presided over a barbaric regime which had tyrannised his people for decades.

Absolute monarchy

Saudi Arabia was created in 1932 as an absolute monarchy supported by the strictly conservative Wahhabi Sect. Despite some very minor reforms the political system established then still exists today. It is a violently repressive society which rejects democracy and civil rights as 'un-Islamic' and clamps down hard on any opposition.

Last year, Human Rights Watch, produced a report which stated that there were at least 30,000 political prisoners and that public floggings and executions were common place. Saudi is also a strictly hierarchal society enforced by law. Women have absolutely no rights and are considered the property of men.

15 per cent of the population are from the Shia minority and face institutionalised discrimination while there are around eight million foreign workers often subjected to exploitation, brutality and the fear of arbitrary dis-



missal and expulsion. So why were so many western leaders including our own Prince Charles keen to pay their respects and show support? It is because Saudi is one of the cornerstones of world capitalism.

It has a regime which is staunchly pro-capitalists, is locked in a strategic military and political alliance with the West and is the kind of regime that the West would like to see throughout the Arab world.

Too harsh? Look at the track since the end of the Second World War. The West has consistently intervened in the region to undermine progressive and secular governments and support reactionary Islamic regimes.

Like Saudi Arabia, these tend to be enthusiastically pro-capitalist, socially conservative and steadfastly defend western interests in return for political and military support.

Saudi Arabia is an essentially medieval society propelled into the 21st century on the backs of immense oil wealth and foreign investments. In Riyadh, behind the futuristic glass fronted office

blocks, air conditioned shopping malls and manicured lawns is a society which would not have looked out of place a couple of centuries before.

Why is this? Surely this economic development should have been transformational in terms of the development of society. In reality Saudi is controlled by a powerful ruling capitalist class which has systematically looted the country for decades.

Brutality

It rules through a combination of brutality, patronage and corruption and has forged close alliances with the theocratic religious establishment and western governments and companies whose interests it protects. It represents a massive vested interest resistant to any change in society which might threaten those interests.

It has particularly close links with Britain. The Saudi ruling class are major investors in the City of London and have bought scores of billions of pounds worth of British arms over the years; all used for domestic re-

pression or to police neighbouring states.

Its sons are educated at elite private schools in Britain while British military and security advisors educate their Saudi counterparts on the art of repression. Particularly nauseating are the links between the British and Saudi Royal families with regular visits both ways.

Every effort should be made to expose the true nature of the Saudi regime and similar regimes in the region. This means breaking through the media propaganda which portrays these countries as examples of stability and progress, as valuable customers and as principled allies.

It means exposing the true nature of Britain's relationship with Saudi; a relationship based on arms sales, commercial contracts and a complex network of links between members of both ruling classes. What really terrifies the west is that one day this regime will be replaced by one based on secularism and democracy. Who will look after western interest then?

Highlands and Islands MSP
John Finnie lifts the lid

IN THESE hard times it's vital that the public are able to understand where their hard-earned money is 'invested' and, vitally, who the beneficiaries of that public money are.

Everyone agrees that Members of the Scottish Parliament are well remunerated for their work and, when their time as an elected representative is over, they will benefit for a pension paid for by the public.

That pension scheme is operated by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB), the committee that runs the facilities and back-room function of the Parliament. The SPCB is made up of officials and a representative of each of the so-called four 'main' parties with no place, as yet, for us pesky GrIndies!

In November last year, I asked the SPCB "what proportion of the Scottish parliamentary pension scheme is invested in the fossil fuel, defence and tobacco."

The reply was "approximately 4 per cent of assets in oil and gas producers, 1 per cent in oil equipment services and distribution, 2 per cent in tobacco and 4 per cent in defence."

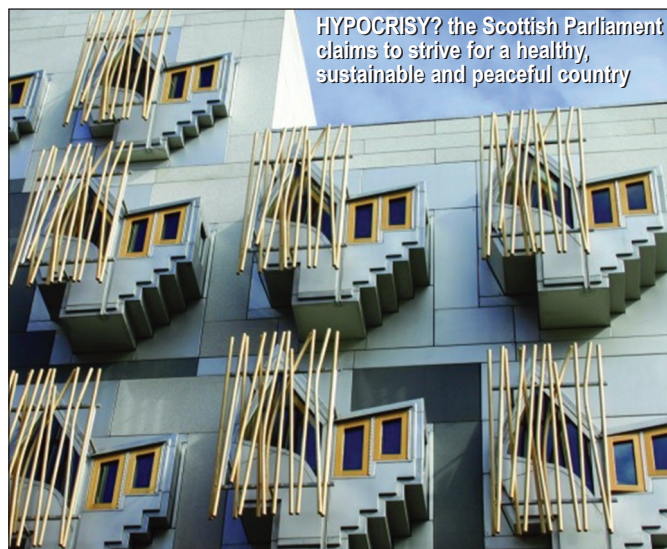
Good global citizens

Scotland must be good global citizens and I requested the SPCB "prepare an early report for members' consideration, laying out how divestment in those unethical areas could be undertaken". I await that response.

What did emerge from my initial question was that the trustees of the parliamentary pension scheme, four MSPs, "appointed Baillie Gifford as fund managers for the scheme and delegated the responsibility for day-to-day investment management to them".

I was also told the parliamentary scheme is "in a pooled fund", which means that the Scottish

IS HOLYROOD INVESTING IN ARMS AND FOSSIL FUELS?



HYPOCRISY? the Scottish Parliament claims to strive for a healthy, sustainable and peaceful country

parliamentary pension scheme is one of a number of investors in the fund. To my surprise I was advised that "under those arrangements, the Scottish parliamentary pension scheme does not directly own any stocks and therefore cannot direct investment."

This of course is mindless waffle, the financial and moral equivalent of 'it was a big boy that did it'. How ridiculous for politicians to suggest they are unable to direct, or account for, how your money is invested.

I subsequently wrote the SPCB to ask what consideration it has given to the exposure of the pension scheme to the so-called carbon bubble risk, described in Scottish Environment LINK's report, "Scotland and the Carbon Bubble", and whether it is confident that the scheme's managers are correctly valuing its investments in oil and gas producers.

Again in written response more excuses about it being a 'group scheme' and the delegation of responsibility to the Fund Managers. However, they inter-

estingly advised me they had "brought the report to Baillie Gifford's attention and asked them to comment on it and explain their investment strategy in terms of oil and gas producers".

Now, why do that if, as already advised on more than one occasion that you have "delegated the responsibility for day-to-day investment management" to said Baillie Gifford.

Desmond Tutu said, "nobody should profit from the rising temperatures, seas and human suffering of climate change", nor should we benefit from the sale of weapons of war, or from the cigarettes that kill 13,000 Scots a year.

Divestment from unethical industries has received a lot of coverage in the last year with Glasgow University leading the way in divesting from fossil fuels—the first university in Europe to do that—and I'm hugely proud of the Scottish student campaigners that made that happen. However, it recently emerged that the University still held investments of three quarters

of a million in two defence industries. Now, we all know how murky the finance waters are and they are even cloudier when you include the defence industries.

In 2013, I asked the Scottish Government whether it maintains details of companies in Scotland involved in research into, development or manufacture of armaments. I was told neither the Scottish Government nor its agencies held such information.

I later asked the Scottish Government whether it provides funding to any company involved in the research, development or manufacture of arms in Scotland only to be referred back to that first answer!

Pages redacted

Eventually, using the Freedom of Information, I managed to get a copy of a Scottish Enterprise Report "An Industry Baseline Study for Aerospace, Defence and Marine Sector in Scotland" with dozens of pages redacted in bright day-glow yellow ink.

Now I find the issue of public investment, pension funds and the arms corporation inextricably linked—cloaked in secrecy.

For a public body like Scottish Enterprise to initially withhold information then release it plastered in yellow ink indicates the contempt for the citizen understanding how and in whose interest their money is being expended.

It is rank hypocrisy for your Parliament and your Government to claim to be working for a healthy, sustainable and peaceful Scotland, when public money is going into bankrolling the very opposite.

My enquiries continue!