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Scotland

New Platform in the Scottish Socialist Party

- News from around the world -

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Below we publish the text of the founding statement of the SSP-United Left platform in the Scottish Socialist Party. The platform includes most of the former members of the International Socialist Movement with which the Fourth International had fraternal relations and which dissolved in March this year, as well as many young members and some older activists who had never been in the ISM.

This is not a time to rage, but a time to reason. Not to fight within ourselves, but to unite behind the fight for a better world. A time to keep our heads, and hold fast to our principles.

We are a substantial group of Scottish Socialist Party activists from across Scotland and across the party, who have a number of concerns with the current direction of our party.

The SSP, since its inception, has been a beacon of hope to the workers movement in Scotland and internationally. In establishing the SSP, we achieved the impossible - uniting the left into a working, fighting political party with a radical agenda and strong, innovative ideas for campaigning and recruiting.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/mcombessp.jpg>]

Working together in this unprecedented way, we made real gains, not just electorally, but at a grassroots level. We can, if we unite as a strong socialist party, create a generational change in society, putting socialist ideas back on the mainstream agenda, and engendering further, deep-rooted change. This is no small matter, given the domination of free market ideology and the pessimism and disillusionment this has bred in two, even three generations. We must always remember that the enemy is without, not within.

But we are deeply concerned that the party's community activism, socialist education and internal unity have failed to match our electoral success. We are concerned that individuals, branches and even regions are susceptible to external interpretations of the SSP's internal politics, created via the media. We want our elected representatives to be wholly accountable to the party, putting the collective interests of the party before individual concerns.

We are concerned by a growing culture of indifference, even hostility, to our commitment to gender equality. Finally, we are committed to a united and non-sectarian Left, and in favour of a transitional approach to socialism, where no struggle, whether based in a community, workplace, or around a gender or race issue, can be ignored. We actively support and participate in all such work.

It is with all this in mind that we feel now is the time to launch an open, democratic, pro-SSP network, open to SSP members and informed by the following points:

Building the SSP

Our network is for activists whose aim is to support, promote and build the SSP as a broad, outward-looking socialist party, working within communities and workplaces, trades unions and colleges, in the streets and on the march, as the party that fights for peace, justice and socialism.

We seek the transformation of society through workers' democratic control of the means of production. We understand that the dismantling of the UK state, and the creation of a Scottish, socialist republic, is an essential part of this process.

Accountability and Participation

Our network aims to build a grassroots leadership of the SSP. We believe in participative democracy, where activity and engagement are encouraged and supported, and where democratic decisions are made by active participants.

Instrumental to this is the SSP's constitution, which we recognise and whose sovereignty we defend. We will campaign within the SSP for full accountability of all elected representatives and bodies, including the commitment to take the average wage of a skilled worker.

Gender Equality

Our network is committed to the principles of equal representation and gender equality at all levels of the party and remain dedicated to the hard-won, ground-breaking policy of 50:50, which facilitates the participation in socialist politics of women who might otherwise, through poverty and shouldering the burden of family care, notably working-class and ethnic minority women, be excluded.

Self-organisation

Our network values and encourages self-organisation amongst oppressed and marginalised groups, and recognises and celebrates these groups' contribution to the political development of our movement. Self-organisation is essential to raising the consciousness and confidence of those whose voices may not otherwise be heard.

Education

Our network will promote socialist education within the network itself and in the SSP, using progressive and inclusive educational techniques, to encourage critical thought and thinkers throughout the party.

Our Network

Our network is built on the principles of openness, inclusiveness, equality and respect, where all contributions are valued and comradely debate is welcomed.

We are a grassroots, bottom-up organisation and as such, promote participatory meeting techniques, where all members are encouraged to speak up and have their say, without fear of being ridiculed, intimidated or shouted down.

New Platform in the Scottish Socialist Party

We, the undersigned, invite comrades who share our principles and ethos to join us and raise an SSP standard for all socialists to rally round.

First signatories

Alfred Archer, Maryhill East

Jack Archer, Maryhill East

David Archibald, Govan

Keith Baldassara, Pollok

Jim Balfour, Glenrothes & Levenmouth

Morag Balfour, Glenrothes & Levenmouth

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Laura Bennison, Maryhill East

Craig Birrell, Renfrewshire

Alister Black, Edinburgh Pentlands

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Bill Bonnar, Rutherglen

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Charlotte Cameron, Maryhill East

Joyce Carmichael, Motherwell & Wishaw

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Total: 147 Signatories