

Scottish Left Review

Issue 96 November/December 2016 - £2.00

'best re(a)d'



INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
25 Nov-

MARKING

SIXTEEN
DAYS OF ACTION
against gender-based
VIOLENCE

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
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FIGHT ANTI-UNION LAWS



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*(which used to be the SNP's position
– before they became the government!)*



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Back to the future and forward to the past

The Jimmy Reid Foundation, the sister organisation of *Scottish Left Review*, held its annual lecture on Thursday 6 October. This year, the fourth annual lecture, was given by Jeremy Corbyn. He received a rapturous reception before he had uttered a word and then afterwards a standing ovation from the majority of the 600-odd people gathered in the Govan Old Parish Church that night.

He spoke eloquently and passionately about his different vision of society, based on need not greed and community and compassion, not competition. As the director of the

Foundation, it was my duty and honour to give the vote of thanks at the end of the lecture. I took the opportunity to say that I was sure that Jimmy Reid would have welcomed Jeremy's election and re-election to the leadership of the Labour party. This was for various reasons, all centred around the point that Corbyn is the Labour leader that many on the left have been wanting - and waiting for – for at least a generation.

Indeed, there are many citizens in Scotland who might have been attracted to stay with Labour had such a person been the leader of

Labour (instead of Blair, Brown and Miliband, and the array of Scottish Labour leaders – Dewar, McLeish, McConnell, Gray, Alexander, Lamont, Murphy and now Dugdale). Corbyn's refusal to support independence would not have been such an issue in these circumstances as it would have been counter-balanced by his more left-wing policies so that far fewer would have supported either the independence or the SNP. But that as we know has not been the case and Scottish Labour elects its own leader. We await to see whether Dugdale will survive the likely drubbing that

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Contents

Editorial comment: Back to the future and forward to the past	3
16 days of action against gender-based violence Carole Ewart.....	5
Securing equal protection from assault Claire Simpson	6
Spend now and save later Angela O'Hagan	7
The women's aid movement in Scotland: are we finished yet? Marsha Scott	8
Acknowledging violence in the workplace Lilian Macer	10
Gender and the local elections Alison Dickie, Lesley Brennan	11
Socialism in a warming climate Stephen Low	12
Turning Brexit into Lexit Neil Findlay and Alex Neil	14
May, Corbyn and the retreat into traditionalism Peter Kerr	15
The great education governance review Bill Ramsay	17
Alternative for Germany – menace to Europe Victor Grossman	19
'I, Daniel Blake' – interview with Ken Loach.....	21
Book reviews Robin Jones, Emma Ritch, Donald McCormick and Sarah Collins	23
Vladimir McTavish's Kick up the Tabloids	27

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Printed by

Hampden Advertising Ltd,
70 Stanley Street,
Glasgow G41 1JB,
Tel: 0141 429 1010

Scottish Labour will receive in six months' time in the local elections. But even if she does not, it is by no means certain that a left leader can or will replace her. Scottish left MSPs are not in large numbers and Scotland, according to the *Herald* (18 October 2016), was the only part of Britain which voted for Owen Smith and not Jeremy Corbyn (by 6,856 for Smith and 6,042 for Corbyn).

The argument that possible Corbynistas have, in fact, joined the SNP (given a Corbyn led Labour Party was not an option until September 2015 and the mass flow into the SNP's ranks began immediately after the referendum result in September 2014) is questioned by the outcome of the SNP depute leadership contest. Just 34% of the 120,000 odd members voted and Angus Robertson won with enough first preferences in the first round. Robertson was the senior right wing candidate and the two left candidates, Tommy Sheppard and Chris McEleny only got 29% between them. The turnout was also down from 55% when Stewart Hosie won the position two years ago, meaning that though 40,500 extra

members had a chance to vote, only 70 more votes were cast compared to 2014, up from 34,934 to 35,004.

Nonetheless, the political earthquake represented by Corbyn and the Corbynistas represents the best chance in a long time to end the Tweedledee and Tweedledum of mainstream politics in Scotland and Britain, where despite apparent differences each major political party subscribes to not just a particular version of capitalism but the dominant current mode of capitalism, namely, neo-liberalism. In the programme for the Corbyn lecture, we reprinted the editorial that Jimmy Reid wrote for the first edition of *Scottish Left Review* in 2000. It, along with Jimmy's column in the *Herald* newspaper (collected in his book published in 2000 called *Power without Principles – New Labour's Sickness and Other Essays*), excoriated capitalism for the iniquities and inequalities it created. But crucially and critically, it also excoriated 'new' Labour for defending and extending the reach and power of the neo-liberal form of capitalism. The abolition of Labour's old Clause

Four of its constitution (in 1995) committing itself to public ownership and Blair's praise of the (alleged) dynamism of the market mechanism were what he took aim at.

For those of us that are serious socialists, there is a necessary discussion to be had on what is the definition of socialism and how the means of getting there relate to the ends of what socialism is or constitutes. What Jeremy Corbyn outlined at the Jimmy Reid annual lecture and the week before at the Labour Party conference are described as both social democracy and socialism. Indeed, Corbyn has referred to

his vision as '21st century socialism'. Historically, social democracy has comprised not the abolition of capitalism but the reform of capitalism through state intervention to ameliorate the outcomes of the market. Public ownership and wealth redistribution are among its key tools. 'Parliamentary socialism' – Labour legislating for social democracy – is the means.

By contrast, socialism is the abolition of capitalism and political power directly wielded workers (through a new form of democracy) for they will now control and benefit from the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

How socialism comes about is not likely to be a repeat of the October 1917 revolution in Russia, involving as it did an insurrection and civil war. This is not least because an array of technologies are now different and Scotland and Britain are advanced capitalist economies (unlike Russia at the time). But what we can say with some certainty is that the split in the international socialist movement occasioned by the Russian revolution is one that is still with us, solidifying the two types of commonly held version of radical new societies, namely, social democracy and socialism. We shall be revisiting these issues at some length in our next edition (January-February 2017) when we ask apropos of the centenary of the October revolution: 'What can we learn from dead Russians?'

Scottish Left Review

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16 days of action against gender-based violence

Carole Ewart outlines the rationale of the on-theme articles for this edition

This edition of *Scottish Left Review* coincides with the 'Campaign of 16 Days of Action against Gender-based Violence' which galvanises activity and attention on the prevalence and impact of violence against women. Acknowledging that violence is about gender inequality and the powerlessness of women is a tough message for some to accept – and which just proves the need for focused activity by government, civil society, the public and private sectors.

The on-theme articles in this edition seek to shine a light on issues which need to be fixed and gender-based violence in Scotland is something we can all do something about. We have, therefore invited articles from a variety of organisations on outlining the extent of the problem and the solutions. As Marsha Scott from Scottish Women's Aid points out, on its fortieth anniversary, the need to provide women and children with refuge from violent partners remains constant so we must do more to prevent and punish such crimes. The 16 day campaign runs between two significant global dates, namely, 25 November which is 'International

Day for the elimination of violence against women' to 10 December which is 'International Human Rights Day'. The interdependence of human rights with equality was acknowledged recently by the Scottish Parliament by changing the remit of the Equal Opportunities Committee to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee. So Parliament will now undertake a thorough public human rights and equality impact assessment of public policy on issues such as social care, housing, education, welfare policy, policing and criminal justice.

2016 is the twenty fifth anniversary of the United Nations campaign which has adopted the theme 'From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All!' The theme was chosen partly as a result of a global survey and recognition that structural discrimination and inequality is perpetuated in a cycle of violence that manifests itself in all aspects of life including education. As a study by the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at the University of Edinburgh revealed children who were assaulted by parents had to miss

school to hide visible bruising and injury and, of course, that impacts on their attainment at school. Consequently, a lack of qualifications means girls have less opportunity to move into well paid, secure jobs and leaving an abusive partner is much more difficult if you have a poorly paid job.

The right to, and opportunity of, education is acknowledged globally in the UN Sustainable Development Goals as it leads to skills and knowledge for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship, as well as gender equality, culture of peace and non-violence, and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Violence remains far too prevalent in people's lives and Claire Simpson's article reminds us of the need for legal change to give children equal protection from assault. Delivering that legal reform would change culture and practice and honour high level political commitments on zero tolerance on violence.

Carole Ewart is a human rights consultant and a member of the Scottish Left Review editorial committee



The Jimmy Reid Foundation

Launch of Jimmy Reid Foundation report against the renewal of Trident

The report, authored by Professor Mike Danson, Karen Gilmore and Dr Geoff Whittam, will be launched at **1pm on Thursday 24 November 2016 in Committee Room 4 at the Scottish Parliament** in Edinburgh. The report covers the moral and philosophical case against renewal, the case for diversification and examines the impact of non-renewal in economic, social and military terms

The launch will be chaired by Lynn Henderson, Scottish Secretary of the PCS union and will include contributions from Bill Kidd (SNP MSP), Alison Johnstone (Green MSP) and Richard Leonard (Labour MSP). If you wish to attend, please contact Bob Thomson (contact@reidfoundation.org) for details.

There will also be a public launch at the STUC Building, 333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG on **Thursday 1 December at 5.30 for 6.00pm**, finishing about 7.30pm. Entry free but it would be helpful if you emailed contact@reidfoundation.org to confirm attendance.

An electronic version of the report will be available at our website www.reidfoundation.org shortly after 24 November. Printed copies will also be available at a small cost for print and postage.

Securing equal protection from assault

Claire Simpson questions if we can eradicate gender violence while upholding a law that teaches children sometimes violence is okay

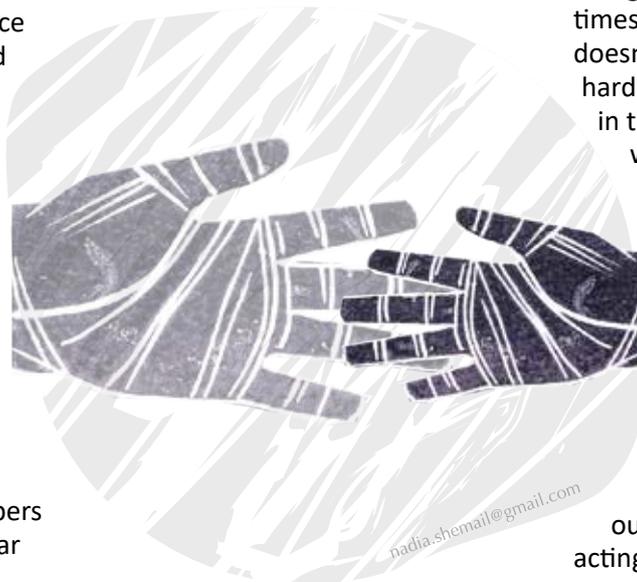
The Scottish Government is developing a comprehensive action plan to deliver its Equally Safe strategy to end violence against women and children, but has had little if any debate about Section 51 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003. Yet that's the section of the Act which gives parents a legal defence of 'justifiable assault', making physical punishment of children legally permissible.

Nearly 15 years ago, during the passage of the Criminal Justice Bill, Holyrood debated giving children the same legal protection against assault as adults. At that time, Scotland was said to have a culture of physical punishment, and elected members discussed what might merit an acceptable level of force against a child. It was suggested that while no force would be acceptable against a baby, some level of force would probably be acceptable against a ten year old.

It's fair to say that many people today would be shocked by the tone of some of that debate. In the years since, our attitudes towards physical punishment and its prevalence have undergone considerable change. The numbers of young adults reporting regular physical punishment during childhood has dropped substantially. Eighty percent of parents in Scotland say they don't think physical punishment is useful. And children agree, regularly reporting that other methods of discipline are more likely to work and less likely to undermine their relationships with parents.

Our understanding of child development and the potential impact of *any level* of physical punishment on children has also vastly increased. Last year, a group of children's organisations published a comprehensive review of the international evidence on the

physical punishment of children called *Equally Protected?* The review, which was conducted to public health standards, found strong and consistent evidence that physical punishment is linked to increases in aggressive and anti-social behaviour in children. Physical punishment was found to make children's behaviour worse and lead to escalating conflict in parent-child relationships. There was good evidence linking physical punishment to mental health issues in children, including depressive symptoms and anxiety. Physical punishment was also linked to some negative outcomes in adulthood, including aggression and sexual violence within intimate partner relationships



Despite robust evidence linking physical punishment to harm, a clear human rights case for equal protection and the change in our social attitudes, legal reform can still seem challenging. Often the question is posed: do we really want to risk criminalising parents?

Legal reform will support parents, not criminalise them. As has been shown to be the case in countries which have already reformed the law, legal reform would act as an instrument of change defining in law a new social norm around what is acceptable treatment of children

and spearhead changes in our attitudes and parenting practices. The Scottish Police Federation, which supports legal reform, is clear that reform will not lead to a huge rise in prosecution. It simply gives children the same right to protection from physical assault as adults. The same test for deciding when to prosecute, based on reasonability and proportionality to circumstances, will be applied to all cases of reported assault against people of all ages: adults and children alike. After all, we are not talking about creating a totally new law, but about removing a defence that gives children less protection from assault than adults.

Being a parent can be tough at times. But physical punishment doesn't help, it actually makes it harder. Violence prevention begins in the home, in the messages we give our children from the earliest age. Legal reform gives a clear message to all of us – and supports us all to move on to better ways of bringing up our children, based on what evidence and research shows us is best. Doing so will not only make us better parents - it will also make us a better society. So let's match our actions to our aspirations by acting now to give our children equal protection from violence.

Claire Simpson is the Project Manager at Parenting Across Scotland, a partnership of charities which offers support to children and families in Scotland. More information at <http://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/>



Spend now and save later

Angela O'Hagan says a gender analysis of spending decisions supports policy objectives

In 2010, the Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG) produced 'Spend Now, Save Later' a briefing for Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland. The core arguments then as now were for local authorities to maintain commitment to the prevention, protection, and provision of services for women experiencing sexual violence and domestic abuse, and to ensure robust gender analysis of spending decisions to support policy objectives and promote gender equality. In the pre-election period ahead of local government elections in May 2017, these arguments remain as strong as ever.

Cuts to local government budgets have persisted in recent years, with a 7.5% real term cut in the current settlement from 2016-17, resulting in strained relationships between councils and the Scottish Government. Local government voices have raised strong criticisms of the Scottish Government, recently calling the funding formula 'not fit for purpose' and for greater fiscal autonomy (Holyrood magazine 25 October 2016).

While the pressures on local and central governments remain acute, so does the need to ensure that women – who experience most crimes of sexual violence – are protected from violence and supported following violent attacks and sustained abuse, and to remove themselves from vulnerable situations. SWBG and sister organisations have consistently argued that robust gender analysis of spending proposals, council and programme budgets is essential for the promotion of equality and the elimination of discriminatory outcomes between women and men. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires local councils to make assessments of all spending proposals, including budget allocations and cuts, to ensure they

do not discriminate and to have due regard as to how decisions can advance equality and develop good relations across the community.

Whatever the total of monies available, the core issues of prevention and protection remain despite the enduring restrictions on local government's autonomy to raise revenue through Council Tax variations, and other aspects of decision-making at council level. Funding for support services cannot be vulnerable to budget pressures or, indeed, to changing perceptions of the value of these services and the need for safe spaces (including women-only spaces for women as highlighted in a recent blog by Engender (24 October 2016) which reminded us of the value of women-only spaces and the need for more women to be present, visible and heard in decision-making at all levels of organisational and political governance).



Women's support organisations have welcomed the recent Scottish Government announcement of an extra £665,000 to expand legal advice services for victims of gender-based violence, through the Scottish Women's Rights Centre. The Scottish Government has also committed to spending £7.2m between 2015 and 2018 to prioritise court waiting times for domestic abuse cases and is bringing forward legislation to cover controlling and coercive behaviour as part of expanding understanding of and responses to different forms of domestic abuse.

These political commitments are part of a sustained approach in Scotland, since the early days of

devolution, to engage with the realities of gender-based violence, and to eradicate it as a form of gender inequality. As such, the political engagement is to be applauded and the attendant spending allocations make the commitment more robust.

Sandy Brindley, Director of Rape Crisis Scotland encapsulates the issues when she said: 'The Scottish Government has set out a clear commitment to tackling violence against women and girls in *Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls*. It is crucial that this commitment is matched with secure and adequate funding for frontline services responding to survivors. Local government as well as the Scottish Government has an important role to play in ensuring that no matter where someone lives in Scotland, they should be able to access free, specialist support at the point of need'.

However, as budget pressures bite and parties jostle for position in forthcoming and challenging elections, political commitment to eradicating sexual violence and protecting support services cannot become bargaining chips. Sustained investment in attitudinal change and institutional response that has resulted in an increased confidence in reporting (Scottish Government, 25 October 2016) must be maintained. With over 58,000 domestic abuse incidents reported, prevention and protection are no less a priority now than in previous local government elections or difficult spending decisions.

Angela O'Hagan is Convenor of the Scottish Women's Budget Group which campaigns for gender budget analysis in the Scottish, and local authority, budgets. <http://www.swbg.org.uk/>

The women's aid movement in Scotland: are we finished yet?

Marsha Scott on how anger and frustration led to a movement to rid Scotland of gender-based abuse

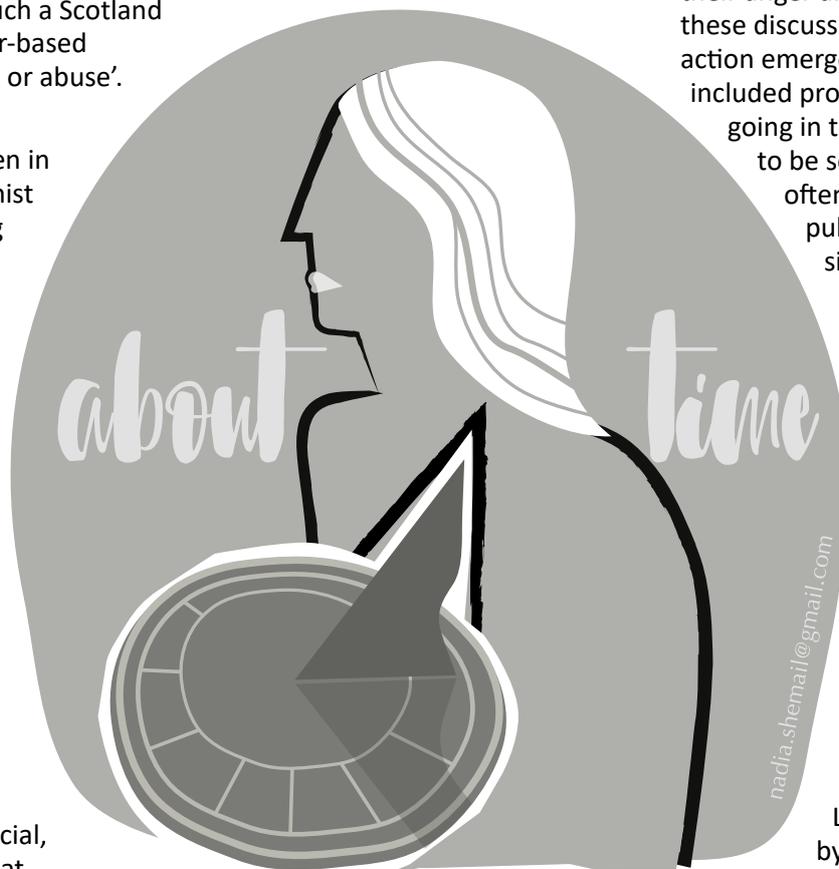
'Let us imagine a Scotland that begins from the hope of its citizens. It is a small but spacious country, and in our imagining, we see a society nurturing the common good of every girl, boy, woman and man ... This spacious Scotland exercises a politics of dignity, justice, and care, in which all are invited to participate ... animated by the spirit and practice of equality. Such a Scotland cannot tolerate gender-based violation, exploitation, or abuse'.

So begins a piece on violence against women in Scotland by the 'Feminist Collective' (comprising myself, Lesley Orr, Emma Ritch and Nel Whiting) written during the heady days of the 2014 independence referendum. The piece went on to describe violence against women as 'an instrument that constricts women's spaces for action in every aspect of our private and public lives ... supported and protected by an enabling economic, social, and political system that privileges (some) men's voices in public discourse, men's seats at the tables of power and policy, and men's interests in public and private institutions'.

This synthesis of women's human rights, critical social and economic analysis, and a laser-like focus on power and control is just one of the legacies of feminist organising in Scotland and of the women's liberation movement that began in so many places in the 1960s.

Challenging the 'aye-been' of male privilege and power, women across Scotland came together in kitchens,

on the streets, in basement refuges, and finally in the organisations that advocate for elimination of violence and women's inequality. Perhaps the most visible - and radical - result was the emergence of the women's aid and rape crisis movements, and both Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland are marking their fortieth birthdays this year.



Women's Aid in Scotland began during the 1970s, and its roots were in the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). The WLM was a vibrant, challenging, and exciting social movement which emerged in many countries around the world, including in Scotland, in the late 1960s. It brought together women who were angry about the many limitations women faced in their everyday lives, and new-to-activism women campaigned for equal pay, free childcare, financial and legal independence, an end to discrimination against lesbians,

free and safe access to abortion and many other issues (see Sarah Browne *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland*, MUP, 2014).

The WLM in Scotland first emerged in Lerwick, Dundee, Aberdeen, St Andrews, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Groups of women in these towns and cities got together to discuss their anger and frustration and from these discussions ideas for political action emerged. These campaigns included protesting for equal pay, going in to pubs and demanding to be served (women were often not allowed into pubs or were asked to sit in a separate area), and spray-painting offensive advertising with messages like 'This is degrading and offends women'. They also set up a range of organisations and groups which last to this day, including Women's Aid.

The first space for women leaving violent situations to open was in Chiswick, London in 1971, led by Erin Pizzey. In 1973

Women's Aid groups were started in Edinburgh and Glasgow, quickly followed by the opening up of refuges. New groups soon sprang up in Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Perth, and further afield. In 1976, it was agreed that there was a need for a group to coordinate a network of Women's Aid groups, and Scottish Women's Aid was established. That network now consists of 36 local services from Shetland to Stranraer.

Most of the local groups offered 'refuge' - a place where women and their children could go to be safe from sometimes life-threatening violence and abuse. According

**STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**



to Sarah Browne, coordinating a Heritage Lottery Fund project called 'Speaking Out: Recalling Women's Aid in Scotland' to mark the history of the women's aid movement in Scotland: 'The rapid development of Women's Aid was inseparable from the movement's distinctive feminist ethos, organisational structure and governance, with an explicit commitment to radical social change. Since the 1970s, the network and Scottish Women's Aid (doing national strategic work as well as supporting the network) have contributed in significant ways to the shaping of legislation, social policy and collaborative partnership working – before and since devolution'.

Much has changed in Scotland since 1976, and women and children in most areas of Scotland can access a menu of services that extend beyond refuge and might include independent advocacy, one-to-one and group support, counselling, court advocacy, employability support, and CEDAR, which works with children and mothers to repair the damage to bonds that so often occurs in domestic abuse.

What hasn't changed is the prevalence of domestic abuse. In 2015-2016, Police Scotland recorded 58,104 incidents of domestic abuse. According to Anne Marie Hicks, Scotland's specialist domestic abuse prosecutor, domestic abuse 'represents around 25% of our summary business with increasing numbers and complexity of cases received at solemn level'. Scottish Women's Aid's own figures, gathered on its Census Day 2015, are a one-day snapshot of abuse across Scotland. On that Thursday in September, 1,137 women children and young people contacted

Women's Aid, 789 women and 348 children were supported by a Women's Aid group, and 95 women and 11 children and young people contacted Women's Aid for the very first time.

Of course, these figures come as no surprise to Scotland's feminist community, given the lack of progress on such indicators of women's inequality as the pay gap and the lack of women elected to local authority councils. As the aforementioned Feminist Collective wrote:

Women in Scotland earn less than men, depend more on the shrinking pot of welfare benefits, and are more likely than men to be members of the swelling precariat.... The vulnerabilities of precariously employed women—including migrant workers, domestic workers, and women on zero-hours contracts—to sexual harassment and other forms of sexualised violence (including prostitution) are obvious. Women experiencing violence (and the men who perpetrate it) have always understood its intimate relationship to women's access to resources and the connection between income disparity and power.

So women's economic dependence restricts their choices, reduces their access to justice, and guarantees that most women cannot 'just up and leave'.

But there is no question that domestic abuse has gone up near the top of the public and political agendas, and Scotland's cross-party consensus that violence against women is a cause and consequence of women's inequality frames *Equally Safe: Scotland's new strategy on violence against women and girls*.

It is no accident that the strategy

reflects the feminist analysis that linked poverty of time, power and money to Scotland's problem with domestic abuse in 1976. And, Holyrood will soon be debating a new law on domestic abuse that promises to improve criminal and civil responses and to decrease the large-scale impunity that perpetrators of domestic abuse continue to enjoy in Scotland.

Equally Safe is an ambitious, comprehensive, almost visionary, strategy. Scotland is, I believe, the first country in Europe to imagine grasping the nettle of confronting women's inequality head on in order to end domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women. There will be a backlash from men's rights advocates and other vested interests. There will be gargantuan financial challenges if post-Brexit economic forecasts are even close to accurate. And, there will be fumbling and failure as we learn as we go. But oh the prize! Namely, a Scotland that 'exercises a politics of dignity, justice, and care, in which all are invited to participate ... animated by the spirit and practice of equality'.

Dr Marsha Scott is Chief Executive of Scottish Women's Aid which is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse and plays a vital role campaigning and lobbying for effective responses to domestic abuse.



**scottish
women's aid**
changing **attitudes** changing **lives**

Acknowledging violence in the workplace

Lilian Macer explains why employers need to establish safe systems of work

As Scotland prepares to launch its programme of activities to mark the global campaign of *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence*, it is timely to reflect on the levels and frequency of violence against public sector workers and challenge any perception that it is an acceptable, occupational hazard.

UNISON believes that public sector workers should be able to come to work without fear of violence, abuse or harassment from patients or clients, their relatives or carers. In most cases, people receiving care will be appreciative towards those who treat them but a minority of people are abusive or violent towards staff.

Since 2006, UNISON Scotland has carried out an annual survey of assaults to public sector workers. Our analysis of the figures received for 2016 shows a total of 41,143 assaults, an increase of 2,684 compared with last year's figure of 38,279.



Over the past 10 years, our survey has seen the number of reported incidents of violent assaults almost double. Our surveys have found that care workers faced twice the national average risk of assault, yet the lack of a public outcry would suggest that violence against these staff has in some way been normalised by society.

As a health worker, I see first-hand the trauma staff suffer as a

consequence of this unacceptable behaviour, not just the physical but the psychological effects which can have long term implications and in some cases life changing consequences.

The effects are not only directed towards individual staff for violence and aggression towards frontline healthcare staff in the UK is estimated to cost the NHS at least £69m a year in staff absence, loss of productivity and additional security.



In support of our members, UNISON Scotland campaigned for and welcomed the introduction in Scotland of the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005, and its subsequent amendments. The Act makes it an offence for a person to knowingly assault, obstruct or hinder another person providing certain emergency services, for example, a member of a fire brigade or a person acting for the Scottish Ambulance Service. UNISON wants to see legislation much wider in scope favouring protection for not just a limited group of emergency workers, but all public service workers.

There remains a huge amount of work to be done to support our public sector workforce; employers will say that they have zero tolerance approaches towards the perpetrators of violence. However, in reality

some sectors present particular and increasing challenges.

In a care context, where the workforce is predominantly female, patients/clients with conditions impairing cognitive behaviour will need additional controls in place. To meet the ever increasing demands of complex care needs from our communities, there needs to be recognition by employers and Scottish Government that investing in the right numbers and appropriately trained workforce is crucial to ensure staff safety at work.

Accepting violence against public sector staff should not be the norm. It is not part of the job description and employers need to establish safe systems of work, provide information and training on health and safety risks and control measures that support this workforce.



Lilian Macer is the UNISON Scotland Convenor <http://www.unison-scotland.org/> She is also an Employee Director at NHS Lanarkshire

Gender and the local elections

Alison Dickie urges local government to get serious about gender equality in schools

Hair, make-up, cooking, and cleaning. It was all there. Imagine it: lines of 11 year old boys and girls ferociously scribbling descriptions about their opposite sex on the whiteboard. We were prepping for Burns Day, our Toast to the Lassies, and the reply. All in good humour, of course ... or was it?

Many would laugh at the descriptions, and we did, but the activity presented a learning opportunity in the discussion of the gender stereotyping that exists, even in primary schools. We talked of learned behaviour from home, how gender is portrayed across the world of media and in the workplace. Think just primary teaching and the message of its 91% female workforce.

Gender stereotyping which discriminates is strongly linked to violence against women. At first, there may be the seemingly harmless language and relations of the primary school. But there

follows the sexual jokes and sexting of secondary school, and thereafter, the potential manifestation of violence against women when such behaviour remains unchallenged.

Prevention is key to ending the violence, and what better tool than education? Or more specifically, a gender equality education to challenge those stereotypes. A survey by Zero Tolerance agrees, and of the Scottish teachers and parents questioned, 98% were concerned such learning was not mandatory. And only recently, the EIS produced 'Getting It Right for Girls', a guide for schools on how to spot and challenge those misogynistic attitudes.

The Scottish Government is sending out a strong message against domestic violence, legislating on revenge porn and controlling behaviour, empowering women who have suffered abuse into employment, supporting equality via 50/50, and, through the STEM

strategy, challenging gender roles and encouraging more girls into science, education, technology and maths.

If we're serious about preventing violence against women, local government needs to play a key role in embedding gender equality education across our schools, providing the planning, resourcing and staff training required. Domestic violence impacts heavily on our local services. I'd prefer to use that money to empower our talented, intelligent ... and equal ... young women.

Alison Dickie is seeking selection as an SNP candidate in next year's council elections. She was the SNP candidate for Edinburgh Central in this year's Scottish Parliament elections, losing to Ruth Davidson by 610 votes. More information on Alison see https://politicalal.com/about?iframe=true&theme_preview=true

Lesley Brennan outlines what feminist economics can do in Dundee

Next year's local government elections offer an opportunity to be creative whilst being pragmatic about the constraints. Across the country, the local economies are weak. Thus, the priority must be to keep as much of the local authority's budget within the area. Scottish Labour can pledge to do this by prioritising social infrastructure over physical infrastructure. Take, for example, Dundee. It is witnessing tens of millions being poured into its Waterfront infrastructure projects, which is flooding back out of the city, and at the same time social infrastructure – especially social care – is struggling to wash its face.

Social infrastructure refers to education, care and health services, and includes the labour force that provides these services

and their skills, as well as the buildings and facilities in which they work. Feminist economists have been making the case to prioritise social infrastructure, as empirical data demonstrate that investment in the care industries generates approximately twice as many jobs as investment in the construction sector. Thus, it is not just jobs but an important stimulus to the economy. It makes sense.

In addition, this form of investment contributes towards greater gender equality by reducing employment gaps, improving working conditions in the care sector and increasing the options for informal carers to juggle paid work and caring.

The current Dundee City Council's capital plan for 2017-2022 is valued at £378m. I would advocate that a proportion of this money is shifted

into the care industries. A modest 5% shift from hard infrastructure into social care would lead to a £18.9m increase into the Dundee economy. Moreover, the impact of the multiplier effect would create additional jobs outside the care sector due to the spending in the local economy.

Putting social care at the top of Scottish Labour's manifesto for next year's local elections is a vote winner; as local government must be proactive in boosting employment in its area, supporting the local economy, and if it can simultaneously reduce inequality then all the better.

Lesley Brennan is a Labour councillor in Dundee and was a Labour MSP for North East Scotland in the last Parliament (<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/councillors/lesleybrennan>)

Socialism in a warming climate

Stephen Low charts a way back for Scottish Labour

We cannot separate the state of, or prospects, for Scottish Labour from what has happened in Scotland. And what has happened here is not so much explained by 'Scottish exceptionalism' as 'Scottish typicality'.

Scotland has undergone a process of de-industrialisation, seen a financialisation of capital, the decline of organised labour and the acceptance of a neo-liberal consensus by the *class politique*.

The same thing has, of course, happened to a greater or lesser degree across most of Europe. Just like everywhere else, here we have had a shift of politics to the right, a post-crash collapse of the local social democratic party, and, of course, the rise of nationalism. This is the recent history of practically the whole of Europe – the Languedoc as much as Lincoln or Linlithgow.

Indeed, if the eclipse of social democracy is to be the focus – it's Scottish Labour under Kezia Dugdale that is typical. Polling at 17% is just about where European social democratic parties are these days - it is the relatively stronger performance of the Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour south of the border at 30% that is bucking the trend as, indeed, is the massive upsurge in membership which isn't confined to England and Wales but is much more pronounced there than locally in Scotland.

That, of course, is not to say that *all* Scottish Labour needs to do is be more like Jeremy. It does suggest though that politics - as has been practiced in Scotland this century, by all of the governing or potentially governing parties - isn't going

to rescue Scottish Labour. Post-devolution politics has amounted to timid managerialism garnished with national sentiment or what we might call the 'civic Scotland disease' (the symptoms are warm words and a seeming inability to scare the big business horses). The SNP has that territory all staked out. We need to be altogether more radical and ambitious.



It is in the interests of both the Tories and the SNP to keep stirring the 'national question' pot; both owe their current success to it. Whether we want to or not (for the avoidance of doubt I don't think we should want to), it's simply a fact that we will never 'out Nat' the Nats – nor will we be more convincing unionists than the Tories. It's also a fact if we were looking remotely convincing in either role – they would just up the ante. In the light of these facts, that we shouldn't be placing all our bets on some whizz bang new constitutional offer is a pragmatic as well as a principled one.

That said, whilst Labour does need to shift the agenda from the 'imagined community' onto the existing economy, there is a need to have something to say something on the constitution. Frankly, this isn't likely to be

done by our hands alone – but the offer of a radical shift on a federated British basis. Prior to the failed parliamentary coup against Jeremy Corbyn, there was talk of the British Labour leadership launching a radical approach to citizenship and taking power out of Westminster – of fixing our broken politics across Britain. This would involve changes not just in structures but also in citizenship. The initiative was derailed by the necessity to fight a leadership election but ought urgently to be put back on track.

Getting a hearing won't be easy, but we need to start by putting more emphasis on the *Labour* in Scottish Labour. People need to know that we are serious about tackling the issues that face them in their daily lives; that we will do what is necessary to create more and better jobs; that we will tackle the housing crisis through a massive house building programme; and that we are serious about public services, publicly delivered. We have to be, and be seen to be, agents of change – not managers of decline.

A breach with the political consensus is a practical necessity as well as a political opportunity. Scotland has a vacuum where there should be an industrial policy. This can't be allowed to go on. Vital though they are, we must try and make politics in Scotland about more than the administration of public services. Not least because, post-Smith Commission and the *Scotland Act*, the overall performance of the Scottish economy will be a determinant of the amount of cash available for those services

in a way that it hasn't been before.

MOMENTUM

Richard Leonard MSP has begun the work of trying to fill this void. The initial suggestions he is making are in reality quite modest but such is the penetration of a market acquiescent consciousness that they seem almost wildly radical. Scottish Labour's shadow economy minister is calling for: 'Positive industrial planning, and a comprehensive manufacturing strategy. One which recognises the greater benefits to the Scottish economy of a vibrant and more diverse manufacturing base, and in turn, the much wider export base which could grow from it'.

This sort of contrast with prevailing trends is what we need. It's also the very definition of constructive opposition - something we need to get a lot better at. The challenges of Brexit have been well canvassed, but where has Labour's challenge to the Scottish Government over their attitudes and actions been?

Soon after the referendum a very good (if clumsily entitled) 'A Post Brexit Action Plan for Scotland's Jobs and Economy' was published but has, for practical campaigning purposes, completely vanished. No serious interrogation of the Scottish Government is being attempted on Brexit. The Scottish Government has rejected numerous calls for progressive measures from trade unions (and, indeed, Labour) in recent years because they said they conflicted with EU rules. We should be asking loudly when these issues are to be revisited, not least because it will expose the rather

limited social ambitions of a party whose instincts are innately 'business friendly'.

The relationship with the British Labour party also needs to be looked at. The passion with which Kezia and various others argued at the recent annual British Labour conference that the full autonomy of the Scottish Labour Party was essential to our future surprised many. Of course, that the principle practical effect was to place Kezia (or a front bencher of her choice) on the NEC might possibly have been a factor here. This came out of the blue. The consultation on autonomy launched by the Scottish Labour last year didn't even ask the question as to whether or not we should seek to have anyone (far less the leader) on the NEC.

It is a proposal that comes entirely from right wing maneuverings when it became clear that the membership was determined not to allow Corbyn to be deposed by the PLP. And I can't be alone in noticing the disconnect between the seeming need for Scottish Labour to be at the heart of the British party's decision making being proclaimed as part of a move to have a more separate decision making structure ourselves. That Kezia's first vote on the NEC was to stop a Scottish trade unionist being chair of the British party merely underlines this.

Leading Scottish Labour in these times is, at least, a full time job. Doing that properly isn't really compatible with being a (doubtless much flattered) figure in a British faction fight. Whilst being the toast of Progress and having meetings with Peter Mandelson is all very well, it won't shift a single vote from SNP to Labour. If the NEC role is to continue - it should be democratised. If, as was argued,

it is about representing the whole Scottish Labour Party then it really needs to be someone chosen for that task by the whole Scottish Labour Party. The democratic case for this is strong, but there are sound practical reasons too. It goes without saying that if Labour ever starts to look like a threat to the SNP, we will see crucial eye catching votes scheduled for days when Kezia isn't doing the day job, but instead is at the NEC voting on dates for Labour candidate selections in English county council elections and the like.



Because a radical democratic Scotland needs a radical democratic Scottish Labour Party

Scottish Labour faces huge challenges, and they are far from unique. What is unique to Britain though is that a social democratic party is renewing itself in a radical direction. This is happening faster in England than in Scotland, although it is happening here too as can be seen from Jeremy Corbyn winning the majority of votes in Scotland. Claims to the contrary leave out the votes of affiliated and registered supporters where Jeremy had thumping majorities. We need to be bold in challenging not just the state managerialism of the SNP, but the structure of capital they seek to administer. This will require us to be both radical and bold, but no other course is capable of delivering the change that is so urgently needed. So let us face the future.

Stephen Low is a member of Glasgow Southside Constituency Labour Party

Turning Brexit into Lexit (left exit)

Neil Findlay and Alex Neil says there are opportunities to be had for progressive change

So Brexit it is – the referendum held across the UK resulted in a leave vote. Brexit will happen whether we like it or not. The democratic wishes of the people have to be respected. To do otherwise would risk a huge backlash and undermine the basic principles of our democracy. There is little doubt that the Tory Government is in full headless chicken mode, clueless about what to do in this extremely challenging situation; creating a political vacuum that needs to be filled by those offering alternatives to neo liberal economic orthodoxy that has caused so much damage across the continent.

Our response should be threefold. Firstly we must fight any attempt by the UK Tory Government to use Brexit as the excuse for resorting to unacceptable downgrading of progressive legislation, in relation to human rights, environmental protection, workers' rights and so on. That also means fighting head-on the kind of racism and xenophobia which emanated from the recent Tory party conference.

Secondly, we need to recognise the reality that the EU is no longer the progressive force it used to be, especially in relation to its pursuit of a policy of severe austerity, which is doing so much damage to the people living in the poorest countries in Europe, like Portugal and Greece (13 countries across Europe have youth unemployment

rates above 20% with 3 above 40%). Some of the language used by some of the 'remainers' in this debate seems to idolise the EU as a great force for progressive change, distributing largesse to the masses across the continent. That does not reflect the reality on the ground. We also have to be cognisant of and respond appropriately to the dangers coming from the rise of the far right, both in the UK and in Europe. In France, Austria, Holland, Hungary and Slovakia they are on the march.

Thirdly, we must use the new opportunities which Brexit throws up to pursue progressive policies in Scotland and the UK. For example, by no longer being subject to EU regulations we could abolish the state aid rules which hold back industrial investment and the creation of new jobs and sustainability of existing ones. We could revitalise our coastal communities as we will no longer be subject to the vagaries of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. We could more easily bring the railways back into public ownership. We could ensure the ferries are run for public good not private profit. We could make payment of the living wage a legal requirement for all public sector contractors and sub-contractors. All positive actions that could and should be examined as alternatives in the post-Brexit situation.

We could also take a much

more progressive approach to international trade agreements, for example, by ensuring that any new trade deal which we sign up to requires all participating countries to pay a legal minimum wage equivalent to at least, say, 60% of the average wage in each country. That way we get the benefits of international trade whilst simultaneously making sure that the workers share in the benefits from trading and are not exploited by the kind of trade deals we've seen in the past, which benefitted big companies but did nothing for the living standards of those on low or no incomes. And, we can reject any involvement in trade deals that threaten our public services like the NHS opening them up to competition from US and threatening them with legal action as would happen with TTIP.

Brexit means Brexit. But we've got to ensure it means much more than that. It has to be about the politicians, trade unions and civic society in Scotland and the UK seizing the moment and using the opportunities which Brexit throws up to make our country much fairer, where social justice reigns supreme, and where we end the dominance of and adherence to the market solutions that have in themselves contributed to Brexit vote in the first place.

Neil Findlay is a Labour MSP for the Lothians and Alex Neil is the SNP MSP for Airdrie and Shotts.



May, Corbyn and the retreat into traditionalism

Peter Kerr examines the roots of May and Corbyn's politics

An often overlooked schism has emerged in British politics over the past three decades, one that transcends both left and right, between those we might loosely term 'modernisers' and their more 'traditionalist' opponents. In the theatre of party politics, this divide has opened up various battlegrounds which have, until recently, been dominated by the modernisers, from Kinnock to Blair in the Labour party and then on to the 'Cameroonian' modernisers of the Conservative party. But with Theresa May's elevation to Prime Minister, following in the wake of wider developments, such as the rise of UKIP, the vote to leave the EU and Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader, it is arguable that the traditionalists are now starting to get themselves firmly back in control of the political agenda.

Similar to Corbyn's efforts within Labour, May's first task upon taking over as leader was to put her party's so-called modernisers, those such as George Osborne and Michael Gove, forcefully to the sword. In their place, the appointment of a notably right-leaning Cabinet, including prominent Brexiteers such as David Davis and Liam Fox, who have long been entrenched in the traditionalist wing of the party, provides an ostensibly powerful statement of her intent to lead the party in a different direction to that set out by her modernising predecessor. It is hard not to interpret this move as the latest shot in a battle between modernisers and traditionalists - formerly the



'wets' vs the 'drys' - which has been raging amongst the Tories since the days of Mrs Thatcher.

Before we go any further, and in the interests of balance, it is important to qualify this by noting that those whom we are labelling here as traditionalists are likely, themselves, to reject the moniker of traditionalism. In particular, to refer to both May and Corbyn as traditionalists is far from uncontroversial. Whilst many of Corbyn's critics would want to cast the Labour leader as a throw-back to an outdated 1950s style of retro-socialism, the Corbynites prefer to perceive themselves as modernisers of a different sort - offering a new type of progressive politics that looks to the future more than to the past.

Likewise, May's supporters will undoubtedly want to cast themselves as a modernising force. Thus, for example, in her early statements, she has shown a desire to project herself as a radical, forward-looking reformist leader setting out a new progressive vision for Britain's future. This was echoed in her first speech as PM in front of the door of No 10 when she announced her promise to deliver a social justice agenda which would 'make Britain a country which works for everyone'. This



seemed an obvious nod to her desire to detoxify the party's image as a 'nasty party'; a label she herself applied more than a decade ago - and aimed at the time towards the Tory traditionalists - to describe the popular perception they had created of her own party.

In these types of regard, May has avowedly sought to root herself in the tradition of earlier Tory modernising pioneers, like Joseph Chamberlain - then dubbed 'radical Joe' due to his energetic pursuit of progressive social reforms in areas such as housing, education and community development. Arguably, this is a laudable, reformist tradition to root oneself in.

But whilst both May and Corbyn will seek to present themselves in such ways as modernising agents, they nevertheless share a common tendency to root their distinctive visions of modernisation in very traditional discourses, tropes and symbols, often steeped, as they are, in a heavy nostalgia for the past.

For Corbyn, there is the resurrection of the almost forgotten symbol of the 'labour movement' or the campaign for nuclear disarmament, alongside evocations of past Labour heroes

such as Keir Hardie or Clement Attlee. Likewise, May's traditional Tory nostalgia touches on similar types of sentimentality; a harkening for the days of grammar schools, industrial strategy and a nod towards 19th century philanthropy and the likes of Chamberlain or Disraeli who looked to champion the enhancement of Britain's global status through the extension of Empire.

In both cases, the agenda is very much to take their parties back to their traditional foundations and to strip away much of the modern architecture of the past couple of decades. The result, much to the pleasure of traditional grassroots supporters, is something reminiscent to a return to 'old' Tory versus 'old' Labour politics.

It is likely that this retreat into more traditionalist political territory could reap significant electoral rewards, at least in the short term. The potential basis of support for a retro-style agenda lies in large swathes of an electorate that have notably become disillusioned with many aspects of the modern condition. On the economic side of what we've largely come to know as 'modernisation' lies developments such as globalisation, neo-liberalism and marketisation, whilst on the cultural side we've seen the explosion of multiculturalism and social liberalism.

In recent years, these are the types of developments which the modernisers have been keen to align their political agendas with, in the process encouraging an ever-faster momentum towards greater economic and cultural integration. However, what we've seen in recent years is that these

same modernising forces have helped to create their own type of anti-modernising backlash, a wave of more traditionalist resistance that appeals, in different ways, to voters at both ends of the political spectrum. It is from within this backlash, this retreat from modernisation, that we might begin to locate the politics of both May and Corbyn, though each of the two leaders differ in the particular aspects of modernisation that they seek to reject.

Whilst May's rhetoric doesn't reject all of the elements of either economic or cultural modernisation, it does nevertheless signal a degree of push-back against a number of modernising trends. Her outlook appears altogether more devout than secular, more conservative than liberal and more localised than global; a world away, it could be argued, from the metro-cosmopolitanism of the Notting-Hill set that formerly led the party. And, in her pledge to break with some of the excesses of Osborne's austerity agenda, combined with her instinctive resistance to open borders, and her seeming acknowledgment that the state can act, at least in a minimal way, as a potential vehicle for social change, there are even some fledgling signs of a potential retreat from a discourse of hyper neo-liberalism; albeit these are very early days.

At the heart of this battle for the traditionalist ground is an attempt by both parties to win back sections of the working class – those so called 'left behind' voters - who have, in recent years, either turned their backs on the political system altogether or been lured to the definitively more traditionalist politics of UKIP.

In the pantheon of Conservative party pioneers, both Disraeli and Chamberlain were 19th century Tories who were able to secure working class support. As the forerunners of 'one nation' Toryism, it is easy to see their shadows in May's early rhetoric about supporting ordinary working people. And, as May attempts to win over the working classes, her generally traditionalist, anti-modernising stance might just work to enhance her appeal.

But, it remains highly questionable as to whether looking backwards to a 19th century form of conservatism, built as it was on notions of social philanthropy, nationhood, Victorian morality and empire, can ever provide a solid bedrock for a truly modern Britain and the immensely complex challenges thrown up by a hyper-globalised world demanding ever greater levels of political and economic connectedness.

In this context, May's ostensibly hardened stance on immigrants and Brexit and her evocation of traditionalist sentiment about the good old days of grammar schools and state sovereignty, will likely carry some degree of electoral sway with those groups who are struggling to keep with the accelerated pace of social change. But, it is unlikely to provide any type of effective long-term bulwark for those same groups against the inexorable winds of modernisation.

Peter Kerr is a senior lecturer in British Politics at the University of Birmingham. His research focusses on the Conservative Party, political leadership in the UK and long-term trends in British party politics. He is co-Executive editor of the journal, British Politics.

The great education governance review

Bill Ramsay warns there may be trouble ahead

The Scottish Government's Education Governance Review could herald the biggest shake up of our day school sector in living memory. Indeed, the review is of much more than that as it includes all publicly funded early learning and childcare provision as well. Listing the bodies covered by the review give an idea of the scale: local authorities which encapsulates much of the above and Education Scotland, the Scottish Government, the General Teaching Council, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, universities that provide initial teacher education, the Scottish College for Educational Leadership, the Care Inspectorate and, finally, the Scottish Social Services Council.

The Scottish Government is running a consultation until 6 January 2017. It will then come up with its firm proposals that will then go out for another, this time, legislative consultation. One must assume then it will be the SNP flagship policy for next year's local government elections. Indeed, the aim that the review hopes to underpin, reducing the attainment gap, was a key policy in the 2016 SNP Scottish Parliament manifesto.

The First Minister has set reducing the attainment gap between the better off and the more disadvantaged pupils and students as her defining objective in government. Although made clear during the Scottish Parliament election campaign in April this year, it actually predates that when the Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched way back in February 2015 with a funding stream targeted to schools in areas of deprivation.

The review is largely based on an international report commissioned by the Scottish Government from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Entitled 'Improving Schools in

Scotland: an OECD Perspective', the report runs to 180 pages and at the heart of it is the concept of leading from the middle.

In his statement to the Scottish Parliament, Education Secretary, John Swinney, said 'decisions should be taken at school level. That will be our presumption and we will place it at the heart of this review'. In other words, important decisions that are currently taken elsewhere will be taken in the school. Of course, the big question is what decisions that are currently taken at local authority level will be taken in schools and what will be the future role of Scottish local government in the governance of education?



The Educational
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Part of the leading from the middle idea - in truth, some say that there is more than one iteration of the concept in the OECD report - is to allow schools to organise in clusters which, it is envisaged, will facilitate cross pollination of ideas, experiences and even staff. Currently, almost all of the above is the responsibility of the local authority. It is true that the Scottish Government set policy, but it is for local authorities to implement it, for now at least.

However, the review goes even further than that as it envisages an enhanced governance role for parents and communities. Quite what that means at this time is not clear. What we do know is that all previous attempts to enhance

parental engagement have not been particularly successful. On the other hand, research does show that where parental engagement can be achieved attainment improves so the intention is understandable.

As a teacher trade unionist, I have some questions as well. Teachers do their best for young people when they are motivated and the conditions of service of teachers play a crucial role in that. Those who think otherwise should consider the status of the profession in Finland. The fact that in Finland teaching is a more sought after career than medicine explains why that country sets the global benchmark in education.

This is not a case of special pleading. The conditions of service of Scottish teachers are about much more than pay and hours, holidays and maternity arrangements and the like. The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers, the SNCT handbook as it is referred to, covers much more. For instance, it sets maximum class sizes for different year groups and for young people with special needs. It also describes how to develop a collegiate professional culture. It sees the teaching staff as a team rather than just a group of professionals with, theoretically at least, the head as team leader. Indeed, the SNCT structure has been crucial in developing a culture in which the teacher has a degree of professional autonomy. Nothing like the level of professional autonomy in Finland, of course, but at least the SNCT handbook points in the right direction.

To be fair the Education Secretary says that national conditions of teachers are safe - though whether this translates into the retention of the SNCT remains to be seen. The Education Secretary's wish that decision making should be taken at school level is really important.

There are some key issues that need to be teased out here. Is he referring to the head teacher as autocrat? Is he referring to the head teacher as first amongst equals in the teaching staff? Or is it something in between? As a teacher union activist with decades of experience at local and national level, I have seen every variation of the above.

With over 800 words into the article already gone, I have still to mention the real 'elephant in the room', the occupant of No 11 Downing Street. What I do know is that it is not the address of the Scottish Government Finance Minister. The local government settlement for 2017-18 sees yet more cuts caused by Westminster putting the banks first. Teacher numbers over the years have been cut by local government though we now have in place a mechanism, albeit an at times somewhat crude mechanism, that has stopped the haemorrhage of teaching staff.

I will use one example to illustrate the dilemma that future decision makers in the schools, autocratic or collegiate, will face. For some years, the basic supplies budget has been cut in many schools. Let us assume that a primary school serving a deprived community receives as it will, according to the proposals, a direct budget boost from government. Let us assume that the school, using its new found decision making autonomy, decides to use a significant portion of funds to buy more of the basics that have been in ever shortening supply for years.

What then when the auditor calls? The motion on the governance review passed, though not without debate, by the SNP conference in October makes clear that the funds devolved directly to schools will have to be seen to be spent on tackling the attainment gap.

Then there is the issue of increased community empowerment contained in the proposals. Is it the school community or is it the community served by a cluster of

schools, could it be both or none, depending on the decisions made at local level?

Some communities are already empowered with others disempowered due to deprivation. Will power as well as finance be targeted to those most in need of it, and if so how? Indeed, will existing empowered communities not bridle if relative constraints are put on them? Will the electoral triangulators who make the SNP, according to recent empirical evidence, the most effective election fighting machine in the democratic world, countenance such a course of action?

Of course, if there are no power constraints on the already empowered might we see an actual

widening of the attainment gap? Ruth Davidson and Liz Smith are relishing the prospect. From their own libertarian perspectives, aided and abetted by a simplistic media view of what equity in terms of governance means, they are looking forward to a 'good' local government campaign.

It is important, therefore, that those of us who share the First Minister's vision to reduce the attainment gap ensure that the governance review is not diverted off course into a place where educational inequity is reinforced rather than removed.

Bill Ramsay is Convener of the Equality Committee of the Educational Institute of Scotland. This article is written in a personal capacity



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Alternative for Germany – menace to Europe

Victor Grossman explains the background to the rise of the racist right

This dragon emerged from its egg only four years ago, in February 2013, but has grown so quickly and mightily that its menace extends to the rest of Europe - not only because Germany is geographically and economically so large and very central but also because of the symbolism bound up with the bloody past.

The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), formed from small, hardly known groups, seemed initially to be a project of very conservative but harmless professors and drop-outs from established parties, namely, Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats and the big-biz Free Democratic Party (FDP). Its first stress was opposition not so much to the European Union as to its Euro currency, largely on a German nationalist basis.

Before long, two wings developed, one led by the more moderate (and allegedly mediocre) economist Bernd Lücke, 54, who was no rabble-rouser, and the younger, talented, often happily smiling chemist, Frauke Petry, 41, who was born in Saxony, now a notoriously xenophobic state, she had developed a new chemical product, formed a company with ten employees, gone bankrupt, and was working for a bigger firm when the chance for a new party emerged. She jumped at it, landing at just the right moment.

In July 2015, it came to a showdown. At a congress, Petry's wing, with far stronger pinions, won 60% of the votes. Lücke, complaining that the party had 'fallen irretrievably into the wrong hands' with an 'increase in anti-Muslim and anti-foreigner views', quit, taking about 20% of the members with him to found a less virulent alliance which has all but disappeared. Lücke now has little left except for his seat in the European

Parliament. Frauke Petry's side suffered not a bit from the split and the AfD kept growing and growing.

The AfD has a programme, though its leaders stress a variety of individual aspects. Some attack abortions and same-gender marriage (or its adoption of children), some develop theories on fairer taxes, which always seem to help the very wealthy. Others sound off against climate controls. Most want to build the armed forces and promote armaments research 'to make Germany great again'. This involves abandoning the euro to permit Germany's 'unfettered' growth, but also resistance to US hegemony and, perhaps paradoxically, often support for better relations with Russia.



Some, especially the professors, try to maintain a 'more correct' position in hopes of an accepted, hitherto rejected position in the political landscape. When one of the newly-elected 29 delegates to the legislature of Baden-Württemberg was found to have written a book with anti-Semitic passages, there was a split about ejecting him, and Frau Petry had to be called in to arrange a dubious compromise.

In Saarland, the state AfD was proven by a national magazine to be so closely intertwined with overt pro-Nazis that the national leadership found it necessary to disband it. They are still quarreling. Actually, the whole AfD has countless ties to people from PEGIDA, the organization which has marched in Dresden almost every Monday for the past two years, with the neo-Nazi National Democratic

Party (NPD), the newly-emerging, extreme racist identitaire movement from France and almost any such group or gang of fascist thugs, as hangers-on, advisers or sometimes candidates.

But anti-Semitism plays a minor role. AfD's main target is the largely Turkish population and the refugees who arrived in such numbers in 2015, mostly from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and northern Africa. Muslimophobia is the main weapon of the extreme right in Germany, as in all of Europe.

It was the supposedly more moderate, Professor Alexander Gauland, AfD leader and deputy in Brandenburg, who said, 'Of course we can thank the immigrant crisis for our party's new growth'. He gained fame – mostly negative – when, referring to Jerome Boateng, one of Germany's best football-players, whose father was from Ghana but who was born and raised in Berlin, he said: 'People consider him a good soccer player. But they don't want Boateng as a neighbor'.

The former school teacher, Jörn Höcke, AfD head in Thuringia, is most blatantly racist. On a popular TV programme, he spoke of 'the frightened dreams of blond women'. When the moderator mildly objected, he extended that to 'brunettes and redheads'. It was Höcker who voiced a pseudo-scientific theory 'that evolution led Africans towards an expansion policy based on great fertility while Europeans had a stay-put tendency with few children, and Africans must therefore be kept out - to save German culture'.

Höcke's stress on 'Germanity echoes the past even in its vocabulary. Hitler boasted of his 'thousand year Reich'. Höcke, a possible challenger to Frau Petry's rule, said: 'I want Germany

to have not only a thousand-year past but once again a thousand-year future'. On another occasion, he demanded: 'We must rediscover our masculinity. Only then can we become manly. And only when we become manly can we become resistant'.

But Frauke Petry is not to be outdone. Noted for calls to ban minarets, she also said German police should use firearms 'as a last resort' to prevent illegal border-crossings. Her deputy leader, Beatrix von Storch (grand-daughter of a top Nazi cabinet minister), wrote on the internet: 'People coming out of Austria have no right of asylum. And those on duty at the border may use their firearms ... against people who resist repeated orders to halt by trying to flee'.

When a journalist asked if this applied to women and children she wrote approvingly, 'Ja'. This shocked so many that Frau von Storch claimed that her finger had slipped on the mouse; she hadn't really meant it. But Storch and Petry had, indeed, quoted a West German law of 1961. Sarcasm went viral about the troubles of a Storch (German for stork) with a mouse, but also about the years of reproach against GDR border guards for invoking a related law.

The AfD attack on foreigners, above all Muslims, was the basis for success. It catered to wide-spread feelings of insecurity. Uncertainty about having employment the next day, not forced into some short-term, part-time, underpaid job, about being able to pay the rent and raise a family, led to a disbelief in all the old parties, which promised so much and delivered so little.

AfD voter composition varied; it was often less working class or jobless people than middle-class groups. But everywhere the old tried-and-true solution was applied, only marginally against Jews but, as in most of Europe and increasingly in the USA, primarily against 'Islamification'. Paradoxically, these feelings and votes for the AfD were strongest

in eastern Germany where the number of people of non-German background was by far the lowest, fewer than 3%. But these areas were worst hit economically and most unsettled by systemic change.

Hate-foreigner feelings, fostered by sensational media reports on terrorists or felonies large and small, often by jobless young North Africans, and far less on violent attacks against immigrants, including the torching of their buildings, occupied or not, enflamed chauvinist minds and successes grew accordingly.

In 2013, the AfD barely missed the 5% hurdle needed to get into the Bundestag; after 2014 it got double-digit results everywhere but in Hamburg and Bremen, and celebrated frightening East German successes: 20.8% in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and in Saxony-Anhalt 24.4%, making it second strongest party. Its strong showing of 14.2% in Berlin in September gave it 25 seats in the 160-seat legislature. It currently stands in national polls at about 14%, ahead of the Greens and De Linke (The Left). Its successes mean financial subsidies from the government and a far louder presence in a media never hesitant in giving telegenic Frau Petry a hearing.

What about the De Linke? Of course, it opposes the AfD in every way for the two are implacable foes. But the media again try to equate 'far right' with 'far left', most visibly during a joint TV appearance by Petry with Sahra Wagenknecht, a main De Linke theoretician and co-chair of its caucus in the Bundestag. Perhaps the idea was a mistake, some in De Linke criticized Wagenknecht for the debate; the moderator, and later the media, stressed that both opposed the euro, the CETA and TTIP trade treaties with the USA and criticised Merkel's immigration policies. Of course, their reasons were antagonistic, with Wagenknecht stressing the need to eliminate the causes of refugee immigration and never nearing Petry's nationalist

argumentation.

One criticism regarding De Linke is harder to dismiss. Widespread distrust of the old parties too often includes it, and many protest voters now check the AfD on election ballots. Especially in eastern Germany, De Linke rarely succeeds in responding sufficiently, with aiming at coalitions with Greens and Social Democrats, already achieved in two states and probably Berlin, miserably unsuccessfully in two others, and not with vigorous campaigns in the streets, in front of or inside factories and at job application centers, proving that it fights for people's needs and rights – and for a better society. Far too respectable, it rarely shows the courage and determination which won huge audiences for Bernie and Jeremy. Where de Linke does not present convincing alternatives the AfD wins out, and its successes push most other parties rightward.

Last spring, on the top of the border, the 3000-metre high Zugspitze, Frau Petry met Heinz-Christian Stracke, leader of Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), which may soon win the presidency. This media photo-op aimed at strengthening Petry's inner-party status but also symbolized ties or parallels with parties in France, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, perhaps with UKIP, and with governments in Poland, Hungary and elsewhere. With the economy stumbling even in Germany, *déjà vu* feelings are unavoidable, and the necessity for an offensive by all forces of the left, and workers' organisations in particular, is becoming almost desperately urgent.

Victor Grossman, long-time USA ex-pat in Berlin - an ancient exile from the McCarthy Era. The only person in the world with a diploma from both Harvard and Karl Marx University in Leipzig and author of 'Crossing the River, A Memoir of the American Left, the Cold War, and Life in East Germany' (University of Massachusetts Press) and a monthly bulletin about Germany, to be had from wechsler_grossman@yahoo.de

'I, Daniel Blake' – interview with Ken Loach

The director explains the rationale behind one of his most hard hitting films.



What lies at that root of the story?

The universal story of people struggling to survive was the starting point. But then the characters and the situation have to be grounded in lived experience. If we look hard enough, we can all see the conscious cruelty at the heart of the state's provision for those in desperate need and the use of bureaucracy, the intentional inefficiency of bureaucracy, as a political weapon: 'this is what happens if you don't work; if you don't find work you will suffer.' The anger at that was the motive behind the film.

Where did you start your research?

I'd always wanted to do something in my home town which is Nuneaton in the middle of the Midlands, and so Paul [Lavery, the script writer] and I went and met people there. I'm a little involved with a charity called Doorway, which is run by a friend, Carol Gallagher. She introduced Paul and me to a whole range of people who were unable to find work for various reasons – not enough jobs being the obvious one. Some were working for agencies on insecure wages and had nowhere to live.

One was a very nice young lad who took us to his room in a shared house helped by 'Doorway' and the room was Dickensian. There was a mattress on the floor, a fridge but pretty well nothing else. Paul asked him would it be rude to see what

he'd got in the fridge. He said, 'No' and he opened the door: there was nothing, there wasn't milk, there wasn't a biscuit, there wasn't anything. We asked him when was the last time he went without food, he said that the week before he'd been without food for four days. This is just straight hunger and he was desperate. He'd got a friend who was working for an agency. His friend had been told by the agency at five o'clock one morning to get to a warehouse at six o'clock. He had no transport, but he got there somehow, he was told to wait, and at quarter past six he was told: 'Well there's no work for you today.' He was sent back so he got no money. This constant humiliation and insecurity is something we refer to in the film.

Out of all the material you gathered and the people you met, how did you settle on a narrative?

That's probably the hardest decision to take because there are so many stories. We felt we'd done a lot about young people – *Sweet Sixteen* was one - and we saw the plight of older people and thought that it often goes unremarked. There's a generation of people who were skilled manual workers who are now reaching the end of their working lives. They have health problems and they won't work again because they're not nimble enough to duck and dive between agency jobs, a bit of this and a bit of that. They are used to a more traditional structure for work and so they are just lost. They can't deal with the technology and they have health problems anyway. Then they are confronted by assessments for Employment and Support Allowance where you can be deemed fit for work when you're not. The whole bureaucratic, impenetrable structure defeats people. We heard so many stories about that. Paul wrote the character Daniel Blake and the project was under way.

And your argument is that the bureaucratic structure is impenetrable by design...

Yes. The Jobcentres now are not about helping people, they're about setting obstacles in people's way. There's a job coach, as they're called, who is not allowed now to tell people about the jobs available, whereas before they would help them to find work. There are expectations of the amount of number of people who will be sanctioned. If the interviewers don't sanction enough people they themselves are put on 'Personal Improvement Plans'. Orwellian, isn't it? This all comes from research drawn from people who have worked at the DWP, they've worked in Jobcentres and have been active in the PCS union - the evidence is there in abundance. With the sanctioning regime it means people won't be able to live on the money they've got and, therefore, food banks have come into existence. And this is something the government seems quite content about - that there should be food banks. Now they're even talking about putting job coaches into food banks, so the food banks are becoming absorbed in to the state as part of the mechanism of dealing with poverty. What kind of world have we created here?

Do you feel it's a story that speaks mainly to these times?

I think it has wider implications. It goes back to the Poor Law, the idea of the deserving and the undeserving poor. The working class has to be driven to work by fear of poverty. The rich has to be bribed by ever greater rewards. The political establishment has consciously used hunger and poverty to drive people to accept the lowest wage and most insecure work out of desperation. The poor has to be made to accept the blame for their poverty. We see this throughout Europe and beyond.

What was it like going to film in food banks?

We went to a number of food banks together and Paul went to more on his own. The story of what we show in the food bank in the film was based on an incident that was described to Paul. Oh, food banks are awful; you see people in desperation. We were at a food bank in Glasgow and a man came to the door. He looked in and he hovered and then he walked away. One of the women working there went after him, because he was obviously in need, but he couldn't face the humiliation of coming in and asking for food. I think that goes on all the time.

Why did you decide to set the film in Newcastle?

We went to a number of places - we went to Nuneaton, Nottingham, Stoke and Newcastle. We knew the North-West well having worked in Liverpool and Manchester so we thought we should try somewhere else. We didn't want to be in London because that has got huge problems but they're different and it's good to look beyond the capital. Newcastle is culturally very rich. It's like Liverpool, Glasgow, big cities on the coast. They are great visually, cinematic, the culture is very expressive and the language is very strong. There's a great sense of resistance; generations of struggle have developed a strong political consciousness.

Much of the story deals with suffocating bureaucracy. How did you make that dramatic?

What I hope carries the story is that the concept is familiar to most of us. It's the frustration and the black comedy of trying to deal with a bureaucracy that is so palpably stupid, so palpably set to drive you mad. I think if you can tell that truthfully and you're reading the subtext in the relationship between the people across a desk or over a phone line that should reveal the comedy of it, the cruelty of it - and,

in the end, the tragedy of it. 'The poor are to blame for their poverty' - this protects the power of the ruling class.

Do you make films hoping to bring about change and, if so, what would that mean in the case of I, Daniel Blake?

Well it's the old phrase isn't it? 'Agitate, Educate, Organise'. You can agitate with a film - you can't educate much, though you can ask questions - and you can't organise at all, but you can agitate. And I think to agitate is a great aim because being complacent about things that are intolerable is just not acceptable. Characters trapped in situations where the implicit conflict has to be played out, that is the essence of drama. And if you can find that drama in things that are not only universal but have a relevance to what's going on in the world, then that's all the better. I think anger can be very constructive if it can be used; anger that leaves the audience with something unresolved in their mind, something to do, something challenging.

It is the 50th anniversary of Cathy Come Home this year. What parallels are there between this new film and that film?

They are both stories of people whose lives are seriously damaged by the economic situation they're in. It's been an idea we've returned to

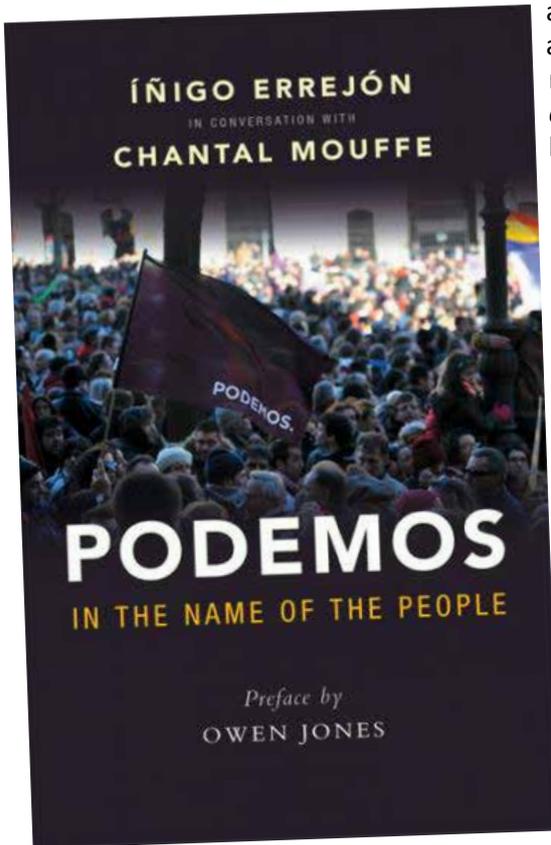
again and again but it's particularly sharp in *I, Daniel Blake*. The style of film-making, of course, is very different. When we made *Cathy* we ran about with a hand-held camera, set up a scene, shot it and we were done. The film was shot in three weeks.

In this film, the characters are explored more fully. Both Katie and Dan are seen in extremis. In the end, their natural cheerfulness and resilience are not enough. Certainly politically the world that this film shows is even more cruel than the world that *Cathy* was in. The market economy has led us inexorably to this disaster. It could not do otherwise. It generates a working class that is vulnerable and easy to exploit. Those who struggle to survive face poverty. It's either the fault of the system or it's the fault of the people. They don't want to change the system, therefore they have to say it's the fault of the people.

Looking back, we should not be surprised at what has happened. The only question is - what do we do about it?

Ken Loach is the most influential radical film maker in the English-speaking world. Among his most popular films are Land and Freedom (1995), My Name Is Joe (1998), The Wind That Shakes the Barley (2006), It's a Free World (2007), Route Irish (2010) and Jimmy's Hall (2014).





Podemos: In the Name of the People

by Íñigo Errejón and Chantal Mouffe, Soundings, Lawrence and Wishart, £10.00, 9781910448809

Reviewed by Robin Jones

At the time of writing, Spain's acting prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, is set to end ten months of political deadlock by forming a minority government – an opportunity he owes to the divisive decision of his rivals, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), to abstain from a parliamentary confidence vote. Podemos, Spain's third biggest party, looks likely to capitalise on PSOE's division. Readers looking for an

introduction to the political theory and practice of this staunchly anti-austerity party will find a valuable resource in *Podemos: In the Name of the People*, a welcome translation by Sirio Canós Dannay of 2015's *Construir Pueblo*.

The discussion between Íñigo Errejón (Podemos's Political Secretary) and Chantal Mouffe (Professor of Political Theory at the University of Westminster) situates Podemos's rise within the broader context of Europe's 'new radical political initiatives'. Mouffe's writing on hegemony, as set forth in her 1985 book with Ernesto Laclau, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, is the starting point for much of the discussion and a subject on which Errejón finds common ground from the outset.

'[H]egemonic power,' says Errejón, 'is the kind of power that, even when it is being defied by its adversaries, must be edified in its own terms ... [a] clear example is Margaret Thatcher's response when asked what she regarded as her greatest achievement. She replied, without hesitation: 'Tony Blair and New Labour. We forced our opponents to change their minds''.

This homogenisation of political parties is a frequent target in the discussion and is presented as both an example of the success of neo-liberal hegemony and as the source of current political unrest. 'When there's no longer a fundamental difference between the programmes of right and left-wing parties,' Mouffe reasons, 'citizens think their vote won't make a difference. They feel excluded by the elites in power,

and that creates a fertile ground for parties that present themselves as the voice of the people against the 'Establishment'.'

This fertile ground exists in an increasing number of countries, from Europe to the Americas, and both Mouffe and Errejón acknowledge that it welcomes seeds of protest from both the right and left of the political spectrum. The left's responsibility is, therefore, to make the argument more effectively than its opponents.

Thus: '[T]hose in power still rule, but they no longer convince,' says Errejón, who sees their failure as an opportunity for new frontiers to be drawn. This, in turn, necessitates the redefining of the adversary: 'in our case,' he argues, 'that meant pointing to the evident oligarchic evolution: the *casta*, the privileged.' It also meant the redefining of his own party. Despite being viewed by many political commentators as a party of the left, Podemos, in Errejón's opinion, occupies the 'centre of the board' while the austerity parties are the true fringes. A rejection of the old borders is, therefore, a rejection of their policies: 'Is it centrist to evict families?' he asks.

This manufacture of new battle lines and new adversaries is crucial to Mouffe's assertion that 'we need to see that impossibility of reconciliation as a tension rather than a contradiction – a productive tension that creates the necessary space for pluralism.' Errejón agrees and criticises those political activists who reject that tension in favour of an obsessive faithfulness to ideology: 'daring to win involves getting your hands dirty ... you have to roll up your

sleeves and swallow the messy reality ... this is definitely less comfortable than the 'purity' of defeat.'

Pragmatism of this sort is a familiar refrain from both thinkers who, in the short term at least, seek to alter hegemony by taking control of existing societal and political structures. It is also, however, responsible for one of the occasional points of disagreement between the two.

In their discussion of 'populism', Errejón acknowledges that despite identifying with the term he has had to abandon it, owing to its cultural and political baggage. Mouffe sees this as a defeat: 'it is very convenient for the parties of the centrist consensus to use the term populist to disqualify their opponents,' she argues. '[W]e shouldn't accept the semantic field the adversaries try to impose on us.' Errejón would like to agree but can't. '[T]ry to explain those theories in a TV studio,' he says, 'in three minutes and with seven people shouting at you.' Pragmatism prevails again. The reasoning is sober, refreshing and welcome.

Robin Jones lives in Paris where he works as an English teacher. His fiction, articles and reviews have appeared in the Edinburgh Review, Gutter, Jacobin, the Dark Mountain Project and Huffington Post.

Feminist Economics and Public Policy,

Jim Campbell and Morag Gillespie (eds.), IAFFE series on feminist economics, Routledge, pp232, 1138950866.

Reviewed by Emma Ritch

Ailsa McKay loved to quote Joan Robinson: 'The purpose of studying economics is not to acquire a set of ready-made answers to economic questions, but to learn how to avoid being deceived by economists.' *Feminist Economics and Public Policy* is at once a tribute to the wide interests and curiosities of Ailsa McKay as well as a continuation of her

work to enable women as individuals, and as a class to avoid being deceived by economists any longer.



Feminist Economics and Public Policy's chapters are grouped into three sections that reflect the domains of Ailsa's most concentrated focus: gender budgeting; women, work and children; and Citizen's Basic Income. It opens with a chapter from Marilyn Waring, reflecting on the threads of conversation that she had had with Ailsa from her home in New Zealand. Waring sets a tone of warm critical appraisal that characterises the book. Her exploration of unresolved tensions within feminist economics; her concerns about its relevance to third gender peoples, the direction the debate on care is taking and the risk of creating a 'boundary of reproduction' that mimics the barren 'boundary of production', and the threat of entrenching a feminist economics monoculture with the mores of the global North, all engage with Ailsa's ideas and work rather than merely restating them.

Waring's own work in the Pacific informs her trenchant criticism of the notion that gender budget analysis is universal, but the first section proper of the book makes a resounding case for gender budgeting in the Scottish and European context. With the context set by Diane Elson on links between gender budgeting and macroeconomic policy, fellow Scottish Women's Budget Group

foremother, Angela O'Hagan, effectively charts the establishment, evolution, and impact of the Scottish Women's Budget Group on the budget process in Scotland.

Women, work and care may be the domain in which Ailsa's influence was most emphatically felt in Scotland. Sue Himmelweit opens this middle section by sounding a note of caution about the implications of framing childcare as infrastructure spending: might it overlook the benefit to today's children by focusing on tomorrow's productive workers, and undermine the case for types of spend where long-term benefits are harder to measure? If Ailsa's work could be summarised, it would be as making women visible and bringing their experiences from the margins into the centre. Her analytical contribution to the Scottish Government's expansion of childcare is described by Scotland's chief economist, Gary Gillespie, and his colleague, Uzma Khan, in their chapter on the integration of economic and social policy. It is apparent in another totemic issue for women's labour market inequality, the persistent gender segregation in the modern apprenticeship scheme.

Emily Thomson neatly explicates the policy and advocacy effects of her work with Ailsa in developing an evidence-base that described women's participation in the programme. Apparent too in this section is Ailsa's foundational commitment to sharing her knowledge and thinking with activists. That the last time she spoke in public was at an STUC weekend school for trade union activist women is fittingly symbolic of the urgency with which she wanted to get what she knew into the minds of women.

The final section engages with different perspectives on the great intellectual passion of Ailsa's life: the Citizen's Basic Income (CBI). A staunch advocate for its adoption in Scotland, and its transformational potential to secure gender justice, she was sceptical of what she had seen as of more traditional social security policy in her work as a welfare rights advisor. The final chapters engage with CBI as gender equality measure,

as possible practice in Scotland, and as international experience.

This is a clear and engaging book, straddling a wide range of ideas and attempting successfully to convey the breadth of enthusiasms that Ailsa McKay had for the illuminating power of feminist economics. It is a moment captured in the middle of a great many conversations happening in Scotland and around the world about how resources should be allocated between women and men, how gender justice should be realised in the labour market, and how citizens should share in the wealth of nations. They are conversations that will continue, enriched by Ailsa's contribution.

Emma Ritch is the Executive Director of Engender. Engender is Scotland's feminist membership organisation (<https://www.engender.org.uk/>)



Andy Anderson, *Currency in an independent Scotland*,

Anderson Publications, pp146 pages, 0992828422

Reviewed by Donald McCormick

'Cometh the event so cometh the book' or some such faux biblical utterance might be appropriate here as Andy Anderson can only have written *Currency in an independent Scotland* at a time when a second referendum was a reasonably vague hope for, at best, some point in the next decade, generation even. Yet another referendum last June, resulting in a victory for the 'narrow nationalism' that our newly anointed Prime Minister, Theresa

May, apparently finds so distasteful, has overtaken political events so rapidly that a second referendum on Scottish independence is not only talked about but has been set on its legislative path by the Scottish Government and, thus, this book has appeared at exactly the right time.

Andy Anderson is unequivocal in his analysis of the failure of the 2014 referendum: 'As we suspected, one of the big mistakes, indeed according to one influential poll by far the biggest mistake, was the currency issue. This issue alone lost the referendum for us but of course it was a link to other issues like savings and pensions ...'. This reviewer has no doubt that this view is correct. The currency issue was the handbag that all too many of the 'yes' campaigners danced around, thereby, giving that darling man from Edinburgh, fronting for those footnotes of history, Cameron and Osborne, the opportunity to scare

the fiduciary bejesus out of a significant section of the population.

Their message was a petted-lipped assertion that the pound belonged strictly south of the border and no one was to be allowed to play with it. As Anderson puts it: 'To some of us who have an understanding of the role of money in the economy, the whole thing appeared as some sort of childish playground game ... It seems all very immature and laughable but it was not that at all. It was a dangerous and undemocratic exercise on behalf of the UK Government, designed to instil fear and concern among the Scottish people, especially the elderly and the vulnerable.'

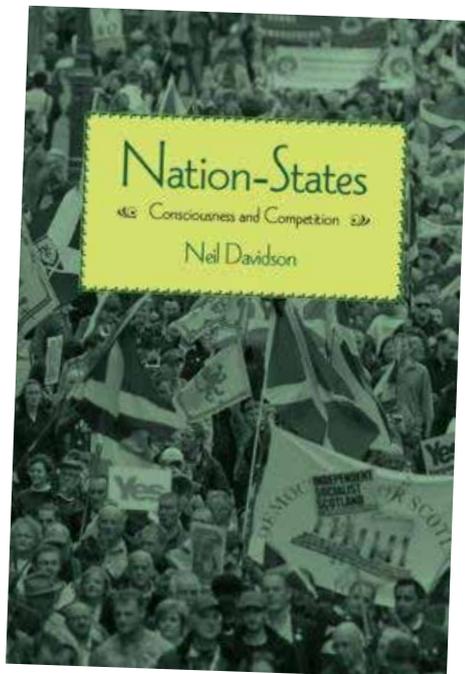
This time round we better have a viable, coherent and above all comprehensible answer to the currency question. Comprehensibility is of the utmost importance because very few of us actually understand money. I don't. The closest I got to

dealing with the semi-mystic notion of currency was by showing my students a genuine 200 million mark bank note dated September 1923. I assured them that in September 1913 this amount of money would have provided everything that their little Beckdashian hearts might desire. Then I turned the note around and asked them what they saw. Nothing. Hyperinflation meant that it wasn't even worth printing on the back of it. There are few social groups more aghast at money, like, losing its value than a teenage audience but they appreciated that the undermining of the currency could lead to social dislocation and a loss of trust in democracy. And that's fine as far as it went.

Andy Anderson is attempting to simplify the fearsomely complex matter of what currency actually is and how a newly independent Scotland could create a viable currency and for this I commend the book. Anderson admits that tethering a new distinctive Scottish currency to sterling is his least favourite option but that in the short term it is a perfectly viable course of action. The snag, it seems to me, is the prerequisite that negotiations have to be approached with a considerably greater degree of political maturity than was evident in 2014.

With May, Davies, Fox and Johnstone *et al.* looking to their political careers I wouldn't hold my breath. Anderson next sets out the construction and maintenance of a wholly separate currency primarily using assets such as the value of the currency printed by the four Scottish banks. It had me convinced but at this point my brain began to hurt. Still, even if I don't agree with all of the politics or much of the historical analysis of *Currency in an independent Scotland* I am somewhat wiser and that's the point. Currency is a complex issue and we should all try to make more sense of it rather than not worry our pretty little heads and fear the worst ... again.

Donald McCormick is a retired history teacher, anti-ideologue and a grumpy optimist



Neil Davidson,
Nation-states:
Consciousness and
Competition,

Haymarket Books, Chicago, £16.99
9781608465682

Reviewed by Sarah Collins

Neil Davidson is probably the most influential socialist writer on the subject of nations and nationalism in Scotland today. His analytical power has made him a force not only in academia, where he has pushed the boundaries of nationalism studies in general and interpretations of Scottish national history in particular, but more importantly in political activism where he has helped to transform the left's relationship to the national question.

The Radical Independence Campaign for instance, has been one of the most significant socialist projects in Scotland in recent years, and would have been unimaginable without the influence of Davidson's ideas, particularly on the group of younger socialists who founded the campaign. It is perhaps remarkable, therefore, that in this period so dominated by the national question in Scotland that it has taken a US publisher to reproduce some of his finest essays on the questions of

the nation, national consciousness and nationality.

Thankfully, Haymarket books have curated a magnificent selection of Davidson's writings, exploring various aspects of nationhood and the under-explored yet vital subject of 'national consciousness'. *Nation-States: Consciousness and Competition* also includes significant discussions of the relationship between capital and nation states and important subsidiary arguments on the relationship between nationalism and the enlightenment, the viability of ethnicity as a concept and the approach of the ruling class to far-right social movements (timely, as the book correctly treats the EU and Brexit as national questions).

Davidson's analysis of nationhood and its historical and contemporary realities is a triumph of non-dogmatic historical materialism, tracing the development of nation states in tandem with the capitalist system and avoiding the popular temptation to read present and hegemonic notions and institutions, in this case nations and national consciousness, back into a history where they make no sense.

Davidson presents a strikingly different approach to most contemporary analyses of the Scottish national question, arguing convincingly that Scottish nationhood finds its origins after the Act of Union of 1707. He does so through an examination of the international pressures of the world system of the eighteenth century, as well as the material realities of Scotland the Britain at the time.

The implications of this theory, which is argued with daunting ferocity, are, of course, radical. They make resolution of the constitutional affair in Scotland a vital political question, and one that cannot be separated from the historical and present realities of British class society. But they also endanger a growing convergence of opinion, born of political expediency, between opponents and supporters of Scottish independence on the socialist left.

For left nationalists, the end of the Union represents simply the re-establishment of the historic Scottish nation, 'extinguished' in the treachery of 1707. The political priority of many left nationalists, thus, becomes independence for its own reasons. For left supporters of the Union, the modern origins of the Scottish nation make the independence movement objectively reactionary – a defiant march into the past in avoidance of the challenges the working class faces in the contemporary world.

Rather, Davidson's theory allows for the appreciation of the independence movement as a moment of rupture against the British ruling class and its state, without assuming anything about the nature of the newly independent country or the necessity for nations to acquire statehood.

The inclusion in the volume of Davidson's responses to the Communist Party's John Foster, one of the few other Scottish socialist historians to seriously interrogate the origins of Scottish nationhood, displays Davidson's devastatingly methodical powers of reason in laying out his argument.

In all this, the reader is struck by the almost frightening scale of the reading involved in each essay. It is tempting to imagine that even someone violently opposed to Davidson's conclusions on the subject of nationhood could safely enjoy reading them. Yet, as alluded to before, Davidson's arguments have a growing resonance in active left wing politics. His sophisticated Marxist understanding of the Scottish national question, and the theoretical apparatus that surrounds it, is key to making the left an effective force in an era when debates about nations and nationalism are moving to the centre of political discourse.

Sarah Collins is a member of RISE and a founding member of Radical Independence Campaign

Kick up the Tabloids

Copy deadlines dictate that I am writing this article more than a week in advance of the US presidential election. That aside, the timing of this edition's theme could not have been more apt. The theme of marking sixteen days of activism against gender-based violence comes at a time when a high-profile court case frees a previously-jailed professional footballer on a re-trial following a previous rape conviction and a US presidential candidate is recorded making outrageously misogynistic comments on camera.

Hopefully, by the time you read this, Donald Trump will have failed in his bid for the White House. Had Trump won the election, nobody in Aberdeen will be reading this article, as their city will have been obliterated by a series of air-strikes in retaliation for building a wind farm next to his golf course, and for Robert Gordon's University revoking his honorary degree.

Trump dismissed his recorded sexist comments as being 'locker room banter' which is code for 'I didn't mean what I was saying' or 'I was talking utter bollocks'. Hardly a vote-winning position: 'Vote for Me. I'm a total bull shitter'.

Trump attempted to shift attention away from his comments by again focussing on Hilary Clinton's leaked e-mails. However, were scrutiny to be placed on his own internet browsing history, I think, he would hardly be so smug. Goodness knows what specialist porn would come up in such a search.

The great and the good of Republican Party immediately come out to denounce Trump's comments, including the former Governor of California himself. When you are seen as being too much of a sleazy sex-pest by Arnold Schwarzenegger, it really is time to take a long, hard look at yourself. (I hopefully typed those words in the right order !)

To explain away such offensive comments as 'locker room banter' is really no excuse. Since when did being

in a changing room suddenly negate all rules about political correctness or human decency. I have been a member of various gyms in a number of different cities in both Scotland and England stretching back over twenty years. On an average of two to three sessions a week - let's call it two-point-five to make the statistics more accurate - this amounts to approximately two thousand, six hundred visits to the gym. This works out at nearly two-thousand, one-hundred and sixty-seven hours, or a little over three months, spent in locker rooms. While the banter tends to be banal in the extreme, I can honestly state that in all that time I have never overheard remarks as boastfully offensive and denigrating towards women. But then, I obviously do not spend as much time in the locker room as Donald Trump, who must spend at least thirty minutes after he's come out of the shower attempting to get that haystack of a hairdo back into place.

This could, of course, illustrate Trump as being incapable of even the most basic example of multi-tasking? It could be that he finds changing out of his trousers into sports gear at the same time at the same time as remembering what constitutes unacceptable language a little too difficult. We call recall that a past president, Gerald Ford, was famously once described by another past president, Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ), as being 'unable to walk and chew gum at the same time'. The saltier version was 'fart and chew gum at the same time' but the US media translated it into a softer version for decency.

We have all been aware throughout the past eighteen months leading up to election day on November 8 that Trump is a monster. It is the changing nature of his monstrosity that has continued to simultaneously intrigue and repulse the public that has kept his campaign fascinating. He appeared at first to be a blowhard braggart and borderline fantasist, but then developed the persona of a boorish racist bigot who went onto reveal himself as full-blooded fascist before being accused

of being a serial sex pest. It's been like watching Walter Mitty turn into Alf Garnett who morphs into Mussolini but actually turns out to be Jimmy Savile all along.

Predictably, Melania Trump stood by her man, as all putative first ladies must. But even her statement of support, which was almost certainly written by somebody else who was probably a bloke, seemed somewhat lukewarm. Her statement ran along the lines that what her husband had said was not acceptable but that he was still the man to make America great again. Which is akin to saying: 'Think what you like about Rolf Harris but I reckon he could lead Australia out of its current recession'.

Melania Trump's stilted speaking manner reminds me of those recording that kidnappers release where the victim re-assures their family and loved ones that they are safe and well, and that they are being well fed and looked after. That, combined with her rabbit-in-the-headlights facial expression, makes her resemble someone suffering from severe post-traumatic stress - which, after eleven years of marriage to Donald Trump, she probably is.

The very idea that Trump ever stood for election will hopefully be seen in future years as being the greatest moment of madness to be inflicted on a once-proud nation. Unless, of course, Charles Manson gets out on parole in time to make a bid for the presidency in 2020. The very idea of Trump as a presidential candidate is as obscene as Ched Evans being nominated for BBC 'Sports Personality of the Year'. God help us all, and hopefully the American people will have voted with their heads come 9 November.

Vladimir McTavish will be appearing in The Stand Comedy Club's satirical revue Topical Storm in Edinburgh on Wednesday 19th November and Wednesday 21st December and in Glasgow on Monday 28th November. All shows start at 8.30pm www.thestand.co.uk

Scottish Rank & File

Unity is Power



The Rank & File was born out of an attack on the skills of electricians in 2011 by eight of the major mechanical and electrical construction companies in the UK. We have also been in the forefront in the fight against blacklisting with our partners, the Blacklist Support Group. We seek the adherence of collective agreements on all construction sites and recognition of all elected shop stewards and safety reps. The Rank & File, who is made up mostly of Unite members but also count members of GMB and Ucat among our ranks, are determined to change the face of construction for the benefit of working people by transforming the attitudes of companies in the industry to realise the benefits of having an organised workforce. To do this we need the assistance of clients such as the Scottish government, local authorities, NHS and Scotland's Universities and Colleges through their procurement processes, in line with the Scottish government's Fair Work Framework.

Together we can make a difference.

- Trade Union Recognition agreements on all construction sites
- Adherence to collective agreements
- Direct employment
- No blacklisting
- No public contracts for blacklisters
- No Bogus self employment or umbrella schemes
- Protect skills
- Proper apprenticeships
- Health & Safety

Contact:

Email: scottishrankandfile@gmail.com



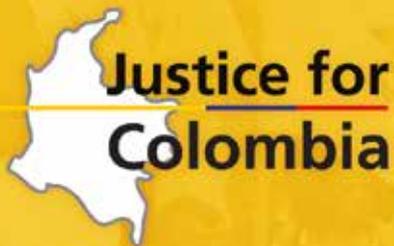
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