Dundee celebrates life of Mary Brooksbank

On Saturday 18 December, Dundee sees events to commemorate the birthday of Mary Brooksbank.

Among speakers taking part are Dundee community activist Siobhan Tolland, Labour MSP Mercedes Villalba, Scottish Green MSP Maggie Chapman and Republican Socialist activist Mary McGregor. There will be a social event afterwards featuring the brilliant Madderam Band.

Mary Brooksbank is the best known Dundee woman trade union and socialist activist of the twentieth century and the event takes place on what would have been her 124th Birthday.

Mary Brooksbank was born in Aberdeen and came to Dundee as a child. She began working in the jute mills, for which Dundee is famous, at an early age and organised women workers into unions – leading strikes and agitating over pay and conditions. She was inspired by attending classes of Glasgow socialist John Maclean through the Scottish Labour College movement to join the Communist Party, but was expelled in 1933 for opposing Stalin. She supported Maclean's aim of an Independent Scottish Workers Republic and continued to be politically active for decades.

But as well as being a political activist, Mary was also renowned as a musician and songwriter. She played violin, sang and wrote the famous "Jute Mill Song" and other songs – her work was recorded by Ewan MacColl. So it is fitting that the tribute to this inspirational woman's life will include a musical performance by Madderam, finalists in the Up and Coming Artist category at the 2021 MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards earlier this month. (Do check out their album *Ebb and Flow* on Bandcamp.)

The event starts at 1.30pm at the Weaver Statue in Lochee High Street, Dundee with speeches and music, and moves on at 2.30pm to the Ancrum Arms Logie Street for the social and band. Participants are asked to follow full Covid guidelines and ensure that they are tested and vaccinated before they attend.

Further details:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/events/1312705905866570

Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mary-brooksbank-commemoration-social-tickets-225538901927

This event is organised by Republican Socialists, which you can find out how to join here: https://join.republicansocialists.scot/ or contact them here: secretary@republicansocialists.scot

---

Kanaky referendum: statement of the Independence forces

The 12 December 2021 referendum on Kanaky independence from France was boycotted by the pro-independence forces, leading to a turnout of only 43% – half that of previous elections and denying the referendum any legitimacy.

ecosocialist.scot is pleased to republish below, in solidarity, parts of the statement of the pro-independence forces explaining their boycott stance. [The statement is translated by International Viewpoint, from l'Anticapitaliste. the journal of the NPA (New Anticapitalist

Party) in France.]

Kanaky is a multi-ethnic colony of the French state in the Pacific Ocean east of Australia, with a population of over 250,000 people. Nouméa is the capital and largest city. It came under a vicious French military occupation in 1853 and was used as a penal colony, housing many of those imprisoned from the uprising of the Paris Commune in 1871. The French colonialists curently call it *Nouvelle-Calédonie* or "New Caledonia", apparently because it reminded the first European colonist to visit it – James Cook in 1774 – of Scotland! The Kanak indigenous inhabitants support an independent sovereign state from France that encompasses all ethnic groups living in Kanaky. Solidarity from Scottish organisations for Kanaky independence and the independence movement would be welcome.

Further background can be found here and (in French) here.

"The population will not accept the result of a consultation organized under the current conditions"

Gathered under the name of "Independence Strategic Committee of Non-participation", the representatives of the political parties (FLNKS, the nationalists of MNSK, PT, DUS, MOI) and the independentist trade unions (USTKE, FLS, CNTP) ***call for the non-participation in the referendum of 12 December****, maintained by the French authorities. We publish extracts from their joint declaration.*

We, the participants of the Yes camp, hope that this final

consultation of the Nouméa Accord will take place in a serene and peaceful climate; everyone can see that this will not be the case. Since 6 September 2021, our country has been hard hit by the health crisis. The death toll continues to rise and the time has come for compassion and condolences for the families. The Covid-19 has created a climate of anxiety, the population is divided on the vaccination obligation and the health pass, both among the Yes and No supporters, in addition to its impact on the world of work, from sensitive sectors to those impacted by the reduction in their turnover. […]

A biased consultation

The final declaration of the Nainville-les-Roches round table of 12 July 1983 opened a 38-year long period in which the Kanak people decided to share their right to self-determination with the other ethnic groups present in New Caledonia. We invited the victims of colonial history, who no longer have any other country, to be part of us, through three consultations and through Caledonian citizenship. This citizenship open to others also provides non-Kanak citizens and communities with a political guarantee of equal treatment and inclusion in the common destiny. It secures the future of the populations concerned. It is the matrix of the legitimized people of this Country. Is there a forced march towards the destruction of this living together?

We refuse to be locked in, as the French State is trying to force us to do, in a choice between a solitary independence of rupture and a new status in France with the enlargement of the specific electoral body to the citizens of this Country. The State's document on the consequences of Yes and No does not enjoy consensus. It was judged as "being neither more nor less than a propaganda manifesto for the No" by the 39th FLNKS congress on 21 August in Nouméa, and by the other pro-independence movements. […]

An irrevocable decision of non-participation

The Minister for Overseas France limits his arguments to a health situation that has become acceptable, without addressing the question of the social climate. In all countries, health and social issues go hand in hand, never one without the other. It would be more appropriate to work on the conditions for organizing a new electoral campaign and voting modalities for a consultation whose date would be agreed for September or October 2022 depending on the health situation, which would however, by that time, have continued in the local way of life.

The Nouméa Accord provides that in the event of a third No, the political forces will discuss the situation thus created. We will only respect the outcome of the last consultation if it takes place in a calm and peaceful social climate and after a fair campaign.

If the French State decides to maintain the date of 12 December, the political groups have already given notice of their irrevocable decision not to participate by not sending any propaganda material to the control commission for the referendum consultation.

Refusal of any commitment to the transition period

If the French state decides to maintain the date of 12 December, who will be around the table to discuss the following day? We won't be there. We do not feel committed to the timetable of a period, transitional or otherwise, that would take us to June 2023.

The consequence of maintaining the date of 12 December will make it impossible to be serene about our institutional and

economic future in the short or medium term. The French state will have to assume sole responsibility for the situation thus created. The population will not accept the result of a third consultation organized under the current conditions. When the time comes, if necessary, we will point out to the international community the failings, the underbelly and the shortcomings of a backward-looking state that does not keep its word and clings to the reductive schemes of yesteryear. The time of colonization is over.

Our future will be one of full and complete sovereignty, because today what divides us is French neo-colonization. We must put an end to this situation once and for all. We have always reiterated our desire to define a new link with France or other countries, as advocated in the Nouméa Accord. This choice is that of a sovereign State free to co-construct interdependence, as Jean-Marie Tjibaou stated. The deepening of these interdependencies or partnerships must be at the heart of the reflection on a project referendum for the 3rd consultation. But if it is absolutely necessary to choose between freedom and these interdependencies, then we will choose our freedom.

8 December 2021

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***L'Anticapitaliste****.*

Victory over Cambo Shows the Way

by Iain Bruce

The announcement that private equity-backed Siccar Point Energy has “paused” its plans for the Cambo oilfield is great news for all of us in Scotland.

It gives hope to everyone concerned about the climate crisis and the future of the planet.

As Friends of the Earth Scotland said when Shell pulled out of the project a week earlier: “People power has made the climate-wrecking Cambo development so toxic that even oil giant Shell doesn’t want to be associated with it any more“.

This is a victory for the huge demos in Glasgow during the COP in November. They may not have swayed Shell on their own, but they obviously helped to change Nicola Sturgeon’s mind. Three days after the end of the UN climate summit, the First Minister finally came out against Cambo. Days later Shell withdrew from its 30 percent stake in the planned oilfield, 1000 metres below the surface in the North Sea west of Shetland.

COP26 may have been an abject failure, in terms of what the governments inside the Blue Zone decided. But over 100,000 people on the streets outside can have an impact. The suspension of Cambo shows that.

Now we have to build on that. We need to push not just for a halt to all new fossil fuel projects. We need a complete decommissioning of the North Sea oil and gas industry within this decade. And that needs to be led by the workers and the communities most affected, with serious investment in good, green, unionised jobs for all.

For that we certainly need to bend the ears of the SNP government, which remains wedded to the false narrative of “net zero”, in their case by 2045.

But above all we need independence, with socialist values.

As the banner at the head of the Independence Bloc on 6 November said, **“It’s Scotland’s Oil, Leave It in the Soil”**.

Denmark: Red-Green Alliance win in Copenhagen

The radical left wing political party the Red-Green Alliance won the largest number of votes in the local elections in the Danish capital Copenhagen in November’s local elections to emerge as the largest political party in the city.

Across the country, the Red-Green Alliance, or Enhedslisten (“Unity List”, EL) as it is also known, won 114 council seats, an increase of 12 on its previous results.

The Red-Green Alliance was formed 32 years ago as a new broad left party contesting elections by an alliance of left wing parties, including the Danish section of the Fourth International, SAP. It now has significant representation in the Danish Parliament, where it has 13 out of the 179 seats and is widely regarded as one of the most successful ecosocialist parties in Europe. The Red-Green Alliance is also part of the European Left Party.

Below we publish an interview with Eva Milsted Enoksen of the Copenhagen Red-Green Alliance by Andreas Thomsen of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation that has been widely published. You can also find coverage of the election here, from the US radical magazine Jacobin.

Scottish local elections take place in May 2022. Sadly, we don’t have a political party in Scotland comparable to the Red-Green Alliance … yet … “unity” appears to be in short

supply among the Scottish left, but through its links with the Fourth International, ecosocialist.scot is proud to be associated with the Red-Green Alliance's success and looks forward to the building of such a party in a future independent Scotland.

Danish municipal elections: Red-Green Alliance strongest party in Copenhagen

Interview with Eva Milsted Enoksen, Copenhagen by Andreas Thomsen

Nov 18th, 2021
Eva Milsted Enoksen

Andreas Thomsen: *The red- green Alliance achieved a very good result in Copenhagen with 24.6 per cent and 1st place. Can you briefly describe the political situation? What were the reasons for this success from your point of view?*

Eva Milsted Enoksen: The Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten, EL) had the best election in our 32-year long history. With 24,6 % of the votes we are now by far the largest party in Copenhagen, the second largest being the Social Democrats (SD) who had a catastrophic election and only got 17,3 %. This is the culmination of a trend of more than 10 years. It is the first time in over 100 years that the Social Democrats are not the largest party in the capital.

There are a few reasons worth mentioning. First, there is the controversy of urban development in Copenhagen, where housing prices are exploding. Social Democrats, together with the

right wing, the Social Liberal (RV) and Socialist People's Party are planning to build an artificial island at the entrance to Copenhagen harbor with housing for 35.000 people. Their argument is the crisis of affordable housing. However, the residential building planned on the island are to a large extent going to be sold on the free real estate marked, meaning very expensive flats that no ordinary worker, let alone student or unemployed person, will be able to afford. The real reason behind the project is that the city is in debt and needs money to pay for a costly metro system. Secondly, there a severe climate and environmental impacts of the project. Many are against the growth logic behind the it; more (expensive) housing calls for more investments in infrastructure (including for cars), which needs to be paid by selling off more building plots to build more (expensive) housing, needing more infrastructure etc. There has also been a huge environmentalist movement organizing against urban development in one of the very few nature areas in Copenhagen.

Also, voters are now more concerned about the climate emergency. Here EL has an advantage over S, being traditionally both red and green and having a very strong support from the young voters. Finally, the Social Democrats did not field a well-known top candidate. The former Lord Mayor from S (Frank Jensen) was forced to leave politics last year after a series of sexual harassment cases and the new Social Democrat candidate is much less known in Copenhagen.

Andreas Thomsen: *How does the municipal system work in Copenhagen? Will we see a red-green lord mayor of Copenhagen now?*

Being the largest party does not necessarily translate into getting the lord mayor post in Copenhagen. The system is such that you need to form a majority of the 55 seats in the city council in order to become lord mayor. Copenhagen has one lord mayor and six deputy mayors, each with certain administrative autonomy. After elections, parties form loose alliances in

order to form majority or minority groups who can then claim (deputy) mayor posts according to their size. A minimum of seven seats is required to name a deputy mayor, and 28 seats is required to name the lord mayor. The majority group gets to choose posts first. After this election, the Social Democrats quickly formed a group with three small far-right parties, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Social Liberals. This was not a major surprise as all these parties had previously declared that they would not tolerate a lord mayor from the far left. This majority group (32 seats) claimed the lord mayor post for the Social Democrat's Sophie Hæstorp Andersen and three deputy mayor posts for the largest right-wing parties. Enhedslisten together with the Socialist People's Party and the Alternative formed a minority group (23 seats) and claimed two deputy mayors for Enhedslisten and one for the Socialist People's Party.

However, the election leaves EL in a stronger position. The party´s two deputy mayors are in charge of urban development, housing, energy and environment, as well as social affairs. It is yet to be seen if this will mean a substantial change in the development and priorities in Copenhagen such as many voters seem to have wanted. If the Social Democrats will choose to work exclusively with the right wing in the next four years, it will leave EL in a difficult position with a strong election result but difficulties delivering major results. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the Social Democratic power position in Copenhagen is weakened, and EL might succeed in including the decisive Social Liberals in forming alternative majorities on specific issues such as environment or climate mitigation.

Andreas Thomsen: *The agendas of progressive urban policy are similar in many larger cities, especially in the area of housing – what do you think can be achieved in the next few years? Do you follow the debates in Berlin on this issue? Is there cooperation?*

Eva Milsted Enoksen: Many in Enhedslisten have followed the successful referendum on remunicipalisation of housing in Berlin. That's a great inspiration. The model we propose as a radical alternative to the current market-based development in Copenhagen is partly inspired by Vienna. We are campaigning for a rent cap. We propose that the municipality shall provide low-interest loans to non-profit housing. And we want to create a municipal fund for housing construction and urban renewal. All in all, we want 75 per cent of new construction to be affordable housing.

Andreas Thomsen: *You are explicitly a red AND green party, an organisation that is committed to ecological transformation as well as socialist class politics. doesn't that create contradictions? How do you deal with them?*

Eva Milsted Enoksen: Actually, I don't' think there is a contradiction. The green transition is acutely necessary, and it is at the same time a unique opportunity to change the capitalist logics and the growth ideology defining most societies today.

Most parties in Denmark are painting themselves green. But solutions are quite different. While the right wing has just recently accepted that there is in fact a genuine crisis which is man-made, Social Democrats have long been vocal about the need to act. However, it has not been a priority in their politics, neither in Copenhagen nor in the national parliament. To a large extent, their strategy is the same as the right wing; we should invest in better technology and that way we don't need to change our society or the way we live and consume. This is also seen as a good business case for Denmark which is already strong in green export technologies such as windmills, waste-to-energy etc.

EL is not against having a focus on new technologies but is also saying out loud, that we need to fundamentally change the way we have organized our societies. In the city we don't need

more parking spaces for private cars, we need more space for cyclists and pedestrians and better and cheaper busses and trains. Off course, not all workers who depend on a car for their daily commute agree with us on this point but here we choose the green focus over the (traditionally) red one.

In general, our green policies aim to benefit ordinary people not elites. The wealthiest countries, multinational enterprises and the extremely rich are also the ones with the largest carbon footprints. We need to make sure that they are also the ones paying the largest part of the bill for the transition.

Eva Milsted Enoksen is a long time member of Red Green Alliance living in Copenhagen, Candidate for national parliament and former member of the Copenhagen party leadership.

Andreas Thomsen is the former Head of Office of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung in Brussels and is now the deputy head of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's national work in Berlin.

Reprinted from https://www.rosalux.eu/en/article/2049.danish-municipal-elections-red-green-alliance-strongest-party-in-copenhagen.html