Our History

ecosocialist.scot is a new website but our roots in Scotland go back a long way through a variety of organisations and publications. This page provides links and publications that give some aspects of Our History – some of which are published online for the first time. The page will develop over time as more historic articles and statements are digitised. There is a brief history and explanatory notes at the bottom of the page.

***Socialist Resistance Pamphlet, 2013, "How Scotland can become truly independent" by Ralph Blake*.**
This 15 page pamphlet has three sections dealing with: the economics of independence, the issue of North Sea oil (originally published by the Radical Independence Campaign), and the politics of the Scottish Socialist Party in the independence campaign.
https://www.dropbox.com/s/i4m7x2nzzbuoov6/SR%20Pamphlet%20How%20Scotland%20Can%20Become%20Truly%20Independent%202013.pdf?dl=0

Statement by Socialist Resistance 2006 on Sheridan attempt to split the Scottish Socialist Party
Socialist Resistance strongly opposed the attempt by Tommy Sheridan and his allies to split the Scottish Socialist Party. This statement explains the position.

Link

Neil Williamson "Socialists and the New Rise of Scottish Nationalism" (1977)

This lengthy article was first published as a supplement to the newspaper of the International Marxist Group, Red Weekly in February 1977. It was a pioneering article that explored the modern issues of Scottish Nationalism and Scottish Independence from a marxist perspective and is republished for the first time here in full text rather than as a scanned newspaper.

Full Text of article

Scan of the original: Red Weekly – Dropbox

Ceri Evans "Whispers of Forgotten Nation" (2002)

This is a collection of posthumous writings on topics relating to Welsh nationalism and broader issues surrounding the approach of marxists to the national question by a prominent supporter of the Fourth International in Wales. It has been republished by the Valleys Underground Welsh marxist organisation.

Link

Obituary of Tony Southall (2002)

Tony Southall was part of the early refounding of the Fourth International in Britain as the International Marxist Group during the late 1960s; he lived in Africa for a period but spent the latter part of his life in Glasgow. Tony had been the secretary of the Committee of 100 – the radical campaign against nuclear weapons led by philosopher Bertrand Russell. Later in his life he was the mainstay of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He died in 2002 in Glasgow. Here we

link to his obituary.

Link

Explanatory notes

There has been British section of the Fourth International that has organised in Scotland from way back, since the foundation of the Fourth International at a conference in 1938. The Fourth International was formed to continue the traditions of revolutionary socialism and to oppose the degeneration of the Communist (or Third) International following its sectarianism in the rise of Hitler, the suppression of rights in the Soviet Union, and the show trials and executions of its critics. The work of the Fourth International in Europe was, however, severely disrupted by the Second World War. For a brief period after the end of the war, there was a single revolutionary organisation in Britain – the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). Unfortunately the RCP disagreed over how to approach the Labour Party and the Labour government, and decided to disband with various components going their separate ways and leading to various strands of the marxist left in Britain over the following decades. A split in the International also took place between 1953 and 1963 (the details of which are discussed in a recent book published by Resistance Books, Memoirs of a Critical Communist, Towards a History of the Fourth International by Livio Maitan).

In 1963 however the vast majority of those forces reunited and there was an attempt to rebuild a new British section. The current that became the Militant Tendency was part of this process but subsequently turned its back on the Fourth International, but out of the process emerged the International Marxist Group (IMG) in the late 1960s. Among the left wing newspapers supported by the IMG from its launch were

The Week, Black Dwarf, Red Mole, Red Weekly, Socialist Challenge and Socialist Action, copies of most of which have been archived online and we will link to interesting articles about Scotland on this page.

During the 1970s in Scotland, the IMG came to prominence in its support for the short-lived breakaway "Scottish Labour Party" formed as a left wing break from the Labour Party by then Labour MP Jim Sillars. The IMG was witch-hunted out of the SLP however and we will publish articles about these events. During this period the IMG also developed an important theoretical analysis of the issues surrounding the rise of Scottish Nationalism and supported Scottish independence. As well as the SLP development, the IMG was also involved in launching a "Scottish Socialist" magazine. Around this time the IMG in Scotland was led by an extremely talented writer, Neil Williamson, and we are republishing some of his materials on this page. Tragically Neil Williamson died in a car crash in 1978 cutting short his major contribution to Scottish politics at the age of just 26. His obituary is reproduced alongside various writings on this page. The IMG called for a vote for devolution in both Wales and Scotland in the first referenda in 1979, unlike some organisations of the self-styled revolutionary left who argued against devolution. Other prominent figures in the IMG at this time included the late Tony Southall, who was also a prominent figure in the movement against nuclear weapons, particularly Scottish CND, before his early death in 2001. We reproduce Tony Southall's obituary and hope to publish more of his writings and contributions. Also prominent in the IMG was George Kerevan, who later became a Labour and then SNP politician and who is today active in the setting up of NOW Scotland. During the 1980s the IMG joined the Labour Party and changed its name to the Socialist League, but a dispute about direction and democratic functioning led to a separation of ways. In 1987 a group of former IMG members and a group led by former car worker Alan Thornett that had a decade earlier been expelled from the then Workers

Revolutionary Party, fused to create a new organisation: the International Socialist Group. Such a regroupment was a rare event on the fragmented British left that has stood the test of time. The ISG became the British section of the Fourth International with a newspaper/magazine called Socialist Outlook. In a series of writings we are linking to here, ISG member the late Ceri Evans developed further the organisation's understanding of the national question before his tragic death in 2002. ISG members in Scotland participated enthusiastically in the process that led in 1999 to the formation of the Scottish Socialist Party as a multi tendency broad left party. The ISG was strongly opposed to the way that Tommy Sheridan and his allies attempted to wreck the SSP and objected to the misogyny and treatment of women by Sheridan in his wrecking actions. We reproduce an article from Socialist Resistance condemning Sheridan at the time. In England, the ISG supported first the Socialist Alliance and then Respect, and launched the newspaper Socialist Resistance with a group of individuals who subsequently merged to form the organisation Socialist Resistance. Socialist Resistance became and still is the British Section of the Fourth International. Socialist Resistance continued to participate in the SSP and supported a "Yes" vote for Scottish Independence in the 2014 referendum. In 2020 Socialist Resistance took part in regroupment discussions that led to the formation of a new revolutionary organisation confined to England and Wales called Anti Capitalist Resistance. As part of that process Socialist Resistance members in Scotland took the decision to launch a new website and organisation called ecosocialist.scot.