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

---

Free Pablo Hasel!

We are reproducing this article from the Republican Socialists blog.
The Republican Socialist Platform condemns in the strongest possible terms the imprisonment of Catalan rapper Pablo Hasél.

Pablo was convicted and now imprisoned in connection with tweets and songs taking aim at the Spanish establishment, including the disgraced former king Juan Carlos I, who has been implicated in extensive corruption in recent years. Far from being an exceptional case, this outrageous use of the law to suppress and criminalise political dissent is consistent with the Spanish state's typical response to democratic and

socialist challenges from below.

Article 578, one of the laws which Pablo supposedly violated, ostensibly criminalises the "glorification of terrorism" but is widely understood to instead criminalise political speech, songs, art and satire. It is regularly weaponised against the left but rarely against the ascendant Spanish far-right.

The Spanish state's authoritarian impulses have been displayed perhaps most clearly in recent years in Catalonia. Since the independence referendum in October 2017, Catalans have been forced to contend with police violence and political trials, including the unjust imprisonment of political and civil society leaders. The independence movement in Scotland has often extended support and solidarity to the Catalan movement and we reaffirm that internationalist position today.

Since Pablo was taken by force from an occupation at the University of Lleida last week and jailed, mass street protests have taken place every single day in cities across the length and breadth of the Spanish state, from Barcelona and Madrid to Seville and A Coruña. Many of these protesters have been beaten, arrested and denounced in the Spanish press and by the far-right as vandals and hooligans.

As Pablo himself wrote on Friday from his jail cell: "You cannot put on the same level the violent repression of the state, with its police brutality, and the struggle of the protesters against that and so much more." We salute the protesters' courage in taking to the streets in defence of fundamental democratic rights and freedoms in full knowledge of how harsh the response was likely to be. The Scottish independence movement could learn a great deal from their tenacity.

As republicans, socialists and internationalists, we support the call for the immediate release of Pablo Hasél and all political prisoners in the Spanish state; for the dismantling

of the anti-democratic laws used to suppress dissent; and for full respect for the right to self-determination.

Llibertat Pablo Hasél!

Free Pablo Hasél!

You can obtain Free Pablo Hasél stickers from the Republican Socialist Platform for distribution in Scotland in exchange for a small donation by contacting treasurer@republicansocialists.scot.

This statement is also accessible in Català, Español/Castellano and Galego.