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Scottish Socialist Party

Urgent Appeal for Solidarity

- News from around the world -

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The Scottish Socialist Party is under attack. Four SSP Members of Parliament and their staff have been issued with a month long ban without wages for defending the right to protest against the meeting of the G8 leaders.

We are attempting to generate as much international opposition as possible to this draconian attack. Therefore we request your solidarity in the following ways:

▶ *circulate this letter among your own members, affiliates and contacts.*

▶ *Sign the online petition at:*

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/754099600?l=1122382283>

▶ *Write to George Reid, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, to register your support for the SSP:*

Presiding Officer, Queensberry House, the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Email: presiding.officer@scottish.parliament.uk

▶ *Contribute to the SSP's fighting fund, to pay the cost of legal action to overturn the suspension of our representatives, and to cover the wages of our staff:*

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On the 30 June 2005 four Scottish Socialist Party parliamentary representatives were summarily suspended and stripped of their pay and parliamentary allowances for the month of September. The financial suspensions will also mean 28 members of staff, not involved in the protest, will also not be paid.

Their crime? Mounting a peaceful, silent protest, lasting five minutes, at First Minister's question time. SSP members Colin Fox, Frances Curran, Rosie Kane, and Caroline Leckie held up placards demanding that First Minister Jack McConnell carry out the will of the parliament by defending the right to protest peacefully against the G8 leaders at Gleneagles on the 6 July.

Five months earlier the Scottish Parliament had passed a motion supporting the right of people to protest at the G8 summit. Yet, just, six days prior to the planned protest, official permission had still not been granted for the protest to go ahead. We believe that this was deliberately done by the authorities, in order to cause confusion and undermine the planned demonstration.

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This unprecedented and draconian penalty was imposed through a process which makes a mockery of natural justice. The SSP MSPs were tried in their absence, without any kind of due process, right of appeal or any of the basic human rights that are enshrined in law.

This attack is not only targeted at the SSP representatives. By banning them for the month of September, 130,000 voters will be denied a voice in the Scottish Parliament.

In the last six years the SSP has established itself as a tireless defender of working class interests at home and around the world. It has a proud record of supporting workers in struggle and has been at the forefront of opposition to imperialist aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2003 we received a 130,000 votes and six Scottish Socialist Party MSPs were elected to the Scottish Parliament. The SSP, as the only party in Scotland consistently opposing the neo-liberal agenda, has earned the enmity of the mainstream political parties and the political establishment.

Therefore we cannot let these attacks on democracy, freedom of speech and the right to protest succeed.

We are campaigning internationally to bring pressure on the Scottish Parliament to overturn the ban and the financial penalties imposed on the SSP MSPs. Already messages of support have been pouring in from all over Europe and the world, from members of the European Parliament, from trades unions and from individual workers.

Please add your voice to the growing campaign by helping in any or all the above ways.

Yours in solidarity,

Colin Fox MSP, SSP convener, on behalf of the Scottish Socialist Party