

WOMEN AND SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE, 21.7.19

Cat Grant

Cat spoke about how independence could help women. There's 60 days to go – so what to concentrate on? There is a gender difference in voting intentions, with more women appearing to be in the 'don't know' camp according to latest poll by the Social Attitudes survey. This doesn't mean they are not going to vote but that they are still unsure. Frustrating that 'women's' issues are always seen to be about childcare – when this should be a joint responsibility for us all as the most important time of a person's life. There are other more important issues such as unequal pay that need to be demanded – and workers who care for children (usually women) have had their hours cut and have no national bargaining framework.

The apparent reticence in making up their minds is because women have to take the risks in life and are naturally more analytical about what it will mean for them, particularly in relation to economic issues. They have a lot more questions about what will happen – about the economy, the welfare state.

But if it's about risk taking, we should take that risk – it's not being more conservative but more pragmatic. 4 out of 5 people applying to food banks are women because they have to organise their household and children's welfare in the main. Labour is not promising to reverse any of the austerity cuts when £11 out of the £15 million of cuts affect women.

On the 19th September we should make demands for women in Scotland. In other small countries women have the support of a written constitution so they can go to the European Human Rights Court for cases of domestic violence etc. On Clydeside there is a statue of La Passionara erected on the Broomielaw to pay tribute to the International Brigade volunteers from Scotland who fought for socialism in the Spanish Civil war. What would she say if she could see the position of women in Scotland now – she would probably be under a control order.

We need a written constitution that enshrines women's rights for good. We also need to learn more about the economy- perhaps economy classes would help??

Discussion

Need to include play areas within meetings so children can be brought along

Need to learn from the experience of Iceland, in writing a new constitution. The long 2 year process was constantly eaten away by the opposition, people got worn down and now the old political structures are back in play.

The demands from the Women's movement in the 60's are still not achieved

How to get more women to meetings – crèche/daytime meetings/topics

To publicise events for 'families'. Efforts to link with toddler groups

Not to forget how many women work in the public services – should approach branches of Unions and get invited along to speak.

The drop in cafes and politician free zones set up by WFI I work well in encouraging women to come. Most talked about issue – the NHS.

Not to be afraid of sounding 'negative' by warning people the status quo will only get worse under the Westminster regime. We need to emphasise that change is GOOD!

We've only ever got progress through fighting and demanding – no use waiting for a wonderful politician – this is a chance to fight for change and to think again about the kind of country we want to live in.

To attach our names to campaigns for equal pay/to protect the NHS/ CND removal of nuclear weapons.