

8 Maxwell Drive

Inverness

IV3 5EX

14/04/07.

01463 238712

Dear Sir/Madam,

First of all, allow me to apologise for the handwritten letter, but the most expensive typewriter in the world - i.e. my computer - has crashed. Thank you for your letter regarding children in need. As a socialist I can only agree with the comments you make regarding budget cuts for what is, to my mind, an essential service. There is a cruel irony in the fact that Scotland is awash with unprecedented wealth while at the same time hundreds of thousands of our citizens are forced to live in a climate of debt, fear, misery and insecurity.

How do we address this problem? For the last 28 years, successive right-wing governments have told us that "there is no alternative to privatisation" - "PPP/PFI is the only show in town" - "only market forces can produce wealth and progress". The fact is that all of these arguments are downright lies. A million times lies! Look at countries like Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia which have rejected the lies of neo-liberalism and introduced programmes of social ownership and public expenditure. Their societies have progressed, the lives of the people have improved.

I believe it is time for the people of Scotland to ask some searching questions of their politicians. Simple questions. Obvious questions. Why, for example, in a prosperous Western democracy are 240,000 Scottish children still living in poverty? Why do we