

Scottish **Left** Review

Issue 73 November/December 2012 £2.00





unite
the **UNION**
SCOTLAND

Fighting for a Future that Works

Unite Scottish Secretary Pat Rafferty

Unite Scottish Chair Stephen Deans

www.unitescotland.org

Scottish Left Review

Issue 73 November/December 2012

In this issue of the Scottish Left Review the Editorial Board has handed over editorial control of the magazine to two groups on the Scottish left. The organisers of the Radical Independence Conference are convinced that independence is the best route to a socialist Scotland. The Red Paper Collective is not. We have divided the magazine in half which you can read from either direction (just flip it over and turn it upside down). We hope this will help to inform the constitutional debate in all parts of the Scottish left.

Please note that the placement of adverts in this issue does not in any way imply advertisers' association with the views expressed in either half.

Covers and illustrations: Nadia Lucchesi - nadia.shemail@gmail.com

Scottish Left Review, 741 Shields Road, Glasgow G41 4PL . Website: www.scottishleftreview.org. Email: editorial@scottishleftreview.org

Tel: 0141 424 0042. Printed by: PrintIt Xpress Ltd, 34 High St., Linlithgow, EH49 7AE

The Radical Independence Conference is a coalition of socialists, feminists, trade unionists, Greens, peace movement, poverty campaigners, anti-racists groups, community activists, civil liberty campaigners and more who believe independence offers Scotland its best hope of a progressive future. Join us in Glasgow on Saturday 24 November. www.radicalindependence.org.

This is the cause of our generation. This is where we must come together. This is when we stop hoping and start offering hope.

It is time for the Scottish left to stop hoping and to start offering hope.

For a generation the left has had to cross its fingers and hope that the British State would just once not behave like the British State. That Labour would change it, not the other way round. That it wouldn't start another war. That it would make poverty history. That it would deliver tax justice. That it would reform itself in the wake of the financial crash.

But this was hoping for a miracle and we all knew it. We have found it hard to maintain our optimism and enthusiasm in the face of what we knew was a futile struggle. The British State is and always will be a machine for

transferring power and wealth from the many to the few.

Now though, across the Scottish left there is suddenly a new vigour, a sense of enthusiasm and optimism we haven't seen in a generation. People are uncrossing their fingers and picking up their pens to write. They are writing about foreign policy, about economic reform, about strategies for inequality, about ownership, about the future of the welfare state.

Why? The prospect of independence. Many people who have never supported independence in the past are joining with many who have – and it is for one simple reason. For the first time in many of our lives we can see a path

from here to a better Scotland which is not blocked by the British Establishment. How much easier to imagine the future when you can imagine getting there.

You want a guarantee of utopia ahead? Well you can't have it. But what you can have is the knowledge that the British State too can imagine a different Scotland, one which is not a cog in its machine. If the British Establishment can fear an independent and independently-minded Scotland, we have sufficient real hope to fight for it.

We are living in the No Campaign's future. This is it. So we have three options. We can accept it. We can go back to hoping. Or we can start to offer

hope, to fight for it. We can build the case for a better future. And for the first time we can have real hope of achieving it. Think of your political life so far. Now think about it again as if all those things you have said for all those years were not just a moan but an option.

Few of us are happy about the drift of the SNP's badly-sown-together patchwork of a vision but for us the idea that this should drive us back into the arms of Tory-dominated Britain seems madness.

If we are to fight for a future, this is where we should do it. 'A plague on both their houses' will not do. These are our houses, our homes, our places of work, our communities. We have no option but to choose a side. We do not find it difficult to choose a side any more. Below we explain why.

On Saturday 24 November the Scottish left will gather in Glasgow to talk about a vision for a better Scotland. What is different this time is that we will also talk about a strategy for getting there. That strategy is all about telling the people of Scotland what is possible; it is about offering them hope. If we can inspire them to vote Yes, to take into their own hands the power to change Scotland, then we believe that we can take them forward from there. The belief that Scotland can be better cannot be expressed by voting No. But if it is expressed by voting Yes then the belief can flow through to that new, young Scotland. If we can persuade the Scottish people of the need for a new Scotland, they will not accept the old Scotland when the time comes to choose the details of their future.

The Radical Independence Campaign is not a simple Yes campaign, it is the start of a movement the goal of which is to remind Scotland that the politics of London are not the only option.

DOES THE NATION-STATE MATTER?

Let us begin with one important argument; this matters. It is a lazy argument of the mainstream media that nation states barely matter any more in the face of transnational corporations. Really? So why do TNCs expend so much energy and money

trying to influence and control national governments? The answer is simple; a state that chooses to be supine to international capitalism is powerless, but a state that chooses not to be is not. After all, what other force or entity

Think of your political life so far. Now think about it again as if all those things you have said for all those years were not just a moan but an option.

is there between global financial and military power and us? Far from being a weak and conservative the concept of the democratic nation state is still a radical ideal – that a people who share a place can collectively decide how they wish their society to be run and how it should behave. People sometimes cite the WTO, the EU and the IMF as evidence of the weakness of the nation state. In fact, these are institutions invented by global capital to circumvent the will of the nation state precisely because they recognise just how powerful it can be. An independent Scotland is our best hope of moderating global capitalism. Britain is one of its lairs.

How do we understand an independent Scotland?

An independent Scotland is a story, not a fact. It is a tale of possible things, an outcome yet to be decided. This more than anything else the No Campaign is desperate to disguise. It has resisted with fury any attempt to picture Scotland's future as anything other than a bastardised version of the SNP's muddled thinking. Of course it has; the No Campaign is scared first and foremost of the idea that Scotland could be better than it is. The No Campaign wants Scotland's future to be reduced to a series of unanswerable questions because it has no stories of its own, only nightmares. It is not an evasion to claim that an independent Scotland's future is its people's to choose. We present that self-evident truth not with a disinterested shrug of the shoulders but with a glint in our eyes. We believe that the fight for Scotland's future is one we can win. We do not believe the same about Britain. The best way to understand an independent Scotland is as a prize to fight for. We are not a campaign for independence, we are a campaign for a better Scotland that we believe begins with independence. Every stage of that battle is one we will contest, from the

negotiations for separation through the writing of a constitution and on into democratic elections. But if this is not concrete enough for you, we offer you this instead: if an independent Scotland is the worst of the SNP, then Britain is the worst of the Tory Party. Even this would be worth the fight

So what's wrong with Britain?

London is one of the world centres of wrongness. It is one of the great centres of destructive finance acting not only as a home for corruption but politically as one of its great global enforcers. It is one of the centres of arms dealing. It is the command and control centre for one of the world's more aggressive militaries with its weapons of indiscriminate civilian extermination. It is the beachhead for attacks on the European social model by (mainly US) corporations. It is a city-state dominated by new money and old, a club of private school boys who have built a haven for wealthy Russian criminals. Running under it is an underground railway and a secretive network of intelligence agencies who define and then pursue 'national security' with little or not reference to the nation's citizens. Above it is an umbrella of right-wing media shielding the population from news about what is raining down upon them. This is the British State.

We would like all the people of Britain to be independent of the British State, free from the manipulation of power and money that makes them poorer so the Establishment and its friends can become richer. We will rally at any time for the cause of independence for the people of England, or of Wales or Ireland. But that fight has not yet begun. Britain remains a state so afraid of the risk of democracy that it can't even countenance a voting system that might upset its cartel politics. It is a political system in which the election of one token Green Party candidate is briefly news then rapidly just a quirk. It is designed not to change. Only after massive horrors has Britain allowed even the smallest reform – it took the First World War to deliver universal suffrage and the Second World War to deliver a welfare state. That was ten years of progress; the rest of the last century has been a continuous process of reversing the gains of those ten years.

Can Scotland be better?

A lot of 'mainstream commentators' have cornered the market in 'Scotland

isn't different' semantics. 'Ignore democratic elections', they say, 'check out my clever analysis of the outcomes of an attitudes survey'. Everyone accepts that Scots tend to answer slightly more towards the left when asked about social attitudes. A lot is being made of the 'slightly' bit at the expense of the 'more towards the left' bit. What do these experts expect in a unitary state with a single national broadcaster and a largely UK-wide, largely right-wing media? Social attitudes don't vary all that much in a single country. So the two most important questions are 'what does this mean in practice?' and 'what might we expect to happen after independence?'. To the first we have a simple, clear answer; in practice it means that only parties advocating a universal welfare state have had any electoral impact for generations with the political right a bystander. This is not slightly different than the UK. Sure, some parts of the north of England vote more like Scotland than the south east of England, but some bits of Edinburgh vote more like the south east of England than like Scotland. So let us drop this desperate attempt to define away the politics of Scotland. Scotland votes well to the left of Britain. That is not in dispute. And there is every reason to hope that in a country with a media no longer dominated by a right-wing London agenda that the people can be further won over to a socially progressive agenda.

Can Scotland do better than England at building a good society? Yes – and we're already doing it. It is barely worth listing the things that the Scottish Parliament does differently from Westminster because you know them, and they're virtually all different and to the left. This is in part because Scotland has a fairer voting system. But above all, democracy in Scotland is not trapped in quite the same web of power as is democracy in London. We do not have the same commercial lobbyists, we do not have the same military establishment, nor quite the same privately educated elite. Of course some of these things would develop in an independent Scotland, but there is every reason to believe that we would never face the same web of power as London – without the financial markets of London and without its military ambitions, Scotland would be structurally different.

What about solidarity?

But what about solidarity with the working people of England? So goes the

standard left-critique of independence. We reject this completely. We do not believe solidarity is UK-shaped. We do not wish to stand in solidarity with London's bankers as they impose vicious cuts on the working people of Greece and Spain. We do not want to stand in solidarity with London's generals as they wage war on the working people of Afghanistan, Iraq and probably soon Iran. We do not want to stand in solidarity with the arms manufacturers of London as they create devices designed to maim and kill working people all over the world. Scotland will do more for the working people of Europe by weakening the British State than we ever will by sustaining it. And we will certainly do nothing for the working people of England if by staying all we do is join them in their choice of one of two corporate parties, neither of which has shown them any solidarity. An independent Scotland has the scope to show real solidarity with ordinary people all over the globe. And the best we can do for the working people of England is to show them that there is indeed a better way to organise a society.

But there is a solidarity that matters now. In Scotland the independence movement has become a left-wing movement. Anyone that doubts that should come to the Radical Independence Conference. It is the opportunity to achieve social change that a big majority of Scotland's left is concentrating on. What we need is solidarity on the Scottish left to work together to make independence work for the Scottish people. That is real and immediate, not a vague notion of connectedness which has done nothing but trap the working people of Scotland in a British right-wing revolution that is more than three decades old.

So what could Scotland be?

Much has been made of the lack of vision for what an independent Scotland could be. We reject this. We believe that much has been distorted to make sure that people can't hear about the real vision for an independent Scotland. Because there is one. Let's call it 'Nordic Plus'. This vision says 'let's look for the best bits of the best societies we can find and move Scotland quickly in that direction. From there we can see further still'. What we want is a Nordic-style universal welfare state with mixed economy model. We want policies designed to spread national wealth as evenly as possible. We want

an open, transparent society which puts human rights and civil liberties to the fore. And we want a benign and collegiate foreign policy which seeks to put Scotland in a global lead position on disarmament, conflict resolution, reducing climate change, tackling global inequality and making global trade and global institutions fairer. We all agree on this, we all know what it looks like. So why do people say there is no vision? This idea is the unifying idea of Scottish independence; it is what has brought us all together. It cannot be 'vanished' simply by making an oh-so-UK knowing quip about 'which would be nice if it wasn't for the tax you'll have to raise'. This is not a fantasy. It works. And it works *because* of the tax we'll have to raise. This is the goal. Don't find reasons not to see it.

So what could we do?

What could Scotland do if it was independent?

- Immediately reform tax to make sure that it is paid fairly by all and that it begins immediately to reverse the growing inequality of Britain
- Put in place pay policies to make equality grow even faster, supported by strong trade unions not persecuted by unfair legislation
- Regulate all economic activity to encourage growth in virtuous areas and diversification away from harmful activities, preventing economic abuse and diversifying ownership models (including nationalisation) to create a more participative and democratic economy
- Focus policies on changing the experience of work, the amount of time away from families, the debt traps of consumer borrowing and so on to make work subordinate to life, not the other way round
- Support and expand universal welfare provision, paid for by fair taxes
- Redesign education as a means of developing citizens and rounded human beings first, employees second
- Put in place a national energy, food and resource security strategy to ensure our society does not suffer from global speculative traders by doing things like encouraging more domestic food production, energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and so on.
- Reform the institutions of Scotland

to make them open and democratic. Everything from reformed local democracy to the governance of quangos must be taken out of the hands of a tiny elite.

- Media ownership must be diversified. The UK's lax 'whoever has the most money' attitude to media ownership must be reversed and a vibrant and robust national broadcaster put in place which has none of the caution and timidity of the post-Hutton BBC.
- Make 'recreation' a national priority so people can define their lives other than by which corporation markets most aggressively. Everything from participative sport to arts and culture, local activism, creative hobbies and much more can be encouraged and supported to reduce our bland consumer culture.
- Create a foreign policy agenda in which a non-aligned Scotland is taken seriously because it invests domestically in conflict resolution, nuclear disarmament, combatting climate change, reducing global inequality and other issues where the world is looking for leadership.

You will have your own list. Right now it might as well be folded up and wedged under a wobbly table leg for all the use it has been. Look it out. Make a better use of it.

What about the 'problems'?

As people of the left you will be familiar with the claim that everything you might want to do is somehow impossible. You may also have noticed that the same is true of the independence movement. We just wanted to create a small, democratic country that operates a mixed economy and has a strong universal welfare state. Who knew that was virtually impossible to achieve? After all, it's not like anyone else has managed it. Other than most of our neighbours. Some simple answers:

- We could adopt Sterling as a transitional currency from which we could migrate to a Scottish currency initially tied to Sterling but eventually under the complete control of Scotland's democracy. Like Denmark. Or Norway.
- We can get rid of the hereditary Monarchy and put in place an elected head of state.
- We can pull out of NATO at any point with only a year's notice.
- We could stay out of Europe but negotiate membership of

the European Economic Area or European Free Trade Area and harmonise laws where they make sense (such as human rights law)

- We don't need an offensive army and we should demilitarise Scotland
- We don't need a bank bailout fund – because we would regulate the banks and make clear that they will not be getting bailed out

Will the left winevevething? Perhaps not immediately. But more than we will ever win in Britain. Even the offer of a fighting chance is welcome. One leading advocate of the British State claims that voting for independence would be like voting for a blank sheet of paper. Amen to that.

There's no point trying to fight because we'll lose...

None of this will happen though because the left is fundamentally weak and divided and when the time comes the neoliberal bankers of Edinburgh will just shove us aside and run Scotland in their own interests. We're genetically programmed to lose and that is why independence is inevitably going to produce nothing more than London Lite.

Enough!

No more self-pitying resignation. No more expectation of failure. No more seeing what we failed to achieve while missing what we have achieved. No more searching for reasons to mistrust each other. We lose because we won't fight together. The comfort zone of throwing stones at pantomime Tory baddies in London in the certain knowledge that at best we replace them with more New Labour pantomime baddies is why we lose. Despite what we have come to believe, the SNP left is not the enemy of the Labour left, the Greens are not the enemies of socialists. We have a cause around which we can unite – the winning of Scotland for the people of Scotland.

It is time to stop believing in failure. That is the expectation that the British State has drilled into us all. There is every reason in the world to believe that Scotland will be more progressive than Britain, every reason to believe that its early years will be shaped more by our left-green coalition which believed in the

possibility of a better Scotland than by the forces of conservatism which said a better Scotland was impossible.

Every one of us must stop looking for reasons to stand on the sidelines. This movement for change is our movement. If we join together we can win not a referendum but a society.

What now?

We address this to those on the left who are not yet sure if they will join us in Glasgow to hear both what kind of Scotland we are fighting for and how we

plan to win it. If you come you will discover that we have no intention of voting Yes and then leaving Scotland's future to others. Independence is only the start. If you come we believe that we will persuade you that this is a pivotal moment, an opportunity to

achieve what we have never had a chance of achieving before. You will find that almost everyone with whom you agree is here. You will find a home that British nationalism will never offer you.

Don't walk away before listening. Don't turn your back with a closed mind. This is bigger than party politics or personal differences. No, this is not the left orthodoxy of the post-war years, the socialism mistrustful of nationalism. It is a new left orthodoxy for a specific place at a specific time. This is the radical cause of our generation. It has brought the left together as never before.

So make a choice. There are three. Choose Better Together's vision of Britain. Choose to hope that you can stay in Britain and win it for socialism. Or choose an independent Scotland for which we can offer hope that people can believe. Let us end by updating Marx's words for 21st century Scotland:

The unionists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the enforcement of all existing power relationships. Let the British ruling classes tremble at Scottish independence. The people of Scotland have nothing to lose but their neoliberal chains. They have a future to win. ■

The organisers of the Radical Independence Conference

LETTERS FROM THE LEFT

The Young Activist

My generation has been labelled 'lost', 'boomerang', 'doomed' as well as 'ipod', 'twitter' and, the more hip version, 'iGen'. These labels essentially reduce us to two common characteristics: (1) without purpose or means to integrate into society (2) the generation that embraced the internet revolution.

This isn't in and of itself inaccurate, but the wrong impression can be created if the political consequences aren't properly understood. Some commentators sum this up as the 'apathetic' generation; no beliefs, no interest in politics, just obsessive texting, Facebook pics and binge drinking. True, apathy towards 'politics' as presented by our political parties and institutions is great, and social alienation is even greater. But the number of people who have participated in a protest of any type is 16 per cent, double the figure of thirty years

ago. Of this, ten per cent have been against the government, five times the equivalent figure twenty years ago. And its overwhelmingly young people on these demonstrations - one-third of the protests were aged between 12 and 25, even though this only accounts for 17 per cent of the population.

Therefore I would prefer to call us the 'Not in our Name' Generation. We have known exactly what we're against. We were the millions who marched against the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, against a Labour government - 'Not in Our Name'. We are the hundreds of thousands who marched in Edinburgh and on Gleneagles against poverty and war against the G8 - 'Not in

our Name'. And, we're the people who charged on Westminster and occupied Tory HQ in our thousands against university tuition fee hikes and the cutting of EMA - 'Not in our name'.

This is because we have had little to believe in. For anyone under the age of 25 we have no memory of the creation of the NHS or council housing. Nor do we have any experience of old Labour, Keynesianism or the Soviet Union and their satellite parties. Rather we grew up under Blair's New Labour who championed the free-market, millionaires and PFI's for our hospitals and schools. To be a young trade unionist today you are consistently reminded of what Labour historically represents. However, the simple truth is that this history has no real relationship to our experience today. When the Conservatives were finally kicked out of office in 1997 people looked to the return of greater democracy and justice for working people but what they got instead was an emerging neoliberalism championed by the very core of New Labour. Young workers who have taken part in industrial action

have experienced the attack on our right to strike from all major political parties. With the privatisation of public services and the commercialisation

of university campuses the domination and pandering to big business is all too familiar.

For those who, like me, have become politically radicalised during this period the British State represents nothing more than an elite club of corporate greed and warmongering. Yes we hate the Tories more than Labour, but to most young people they look like much of a muchness: clichéd, unprincipled, middle to upper class, media whores. *The Thick of It* will be the satire of our generation because it sums up the corruption of neoliberal politics

There's zero confidence in the very institutions that govern our society. A recent poll said that over 95 per cent of young people have no trust in their

politicians. Is that really a surprise when you look to the expenses scandal that rocked the British establishment and saw leading politicians scurrying from Parliament? The warped relationship between government and media corporations like News International? And, most of all, Britain's imperialist aggression abroad which took us into a war in Iraq and Afghanistan based on lies on the coat tails of George Bush? The betrayal of Nick Clegg who spoke out against fees then raised them by £6000? When you add it all up its hardly surprising that there's no trust. 'Not in our name', our generations says loud and clearly.

If Britain is not in our name, how can our generation go further than being against the status quo, and forge something we can believe in?

Independence. This is a cause that can be something we are willing to put our name to. The fight for a new Independent Scotland which puts issues of social justice, equality, real democracy and peace at its core is our greatest task from now until 2014. We've got a chance to create something in our image, and show the world that we are against everything Britain represents. This a cause for our generation. ■

Suki Sangha is a member of the International Socialist Group and actively involved in building the Radical Independence Conference

The Veteran Leftie

I'll be voting for independence when I get the chance in two years' time. That's not a choice I would have made some years ago. So, what's changed?

Probably best to start with what's not changed. I've always believed that the people that live in Scotland should

be able to decide its future. That's not a nationalist sentiment but a democratic one. It underpinned the Claim of Right and the home rule campaign a generation ago and it's precisely why we're having a referendum in 2014. Clearly not everyone agrees and many would dispute that the sovereignty of the people should be exercised within Scotland's borders, but, for now, I'll leave that argument to one side.

So what has changed? Three things. Firstly, the world has changed. The continuing globalisation of capital through the turn of the century has underscored the need for the peoples of various countries to work together if they are to have any chance of tempering its excesses and creating a social infrastructure which can counter its effects. International action between governments is

vital – and the most hopeful and obvious place for the people of Scotland to build those alliances is in the continent of Europe. Scotland needs to work in concert with the other countries of Europe – small and large – to agree policies on social insurance, pensions, welfare and health. Quite simply, the UK is now hindering rather than helping that process, partly because the vestiges

of empire frustrate the ability of that nation state to engage in any meaningful pan-European action. Independence is now a means to a proper interdependence where Scotland can make its own alliances – probably often alongside England – with neighbouring nations who share a common interest.

Secondly, the politics of the UK has changed. Up until the late 1990s I believed that the Labour Party would be able to change the world in the way I wanted. Why else would I have spent so many years within it? I no longer believe that. The bitter experience of the new Labour years both at home and abroad has demonstrated that whilst there are many socialists and social democrats still in the party, as an institution the organisation has no appetite for real change. Even now, two years into

opposition, Labour hardly offers a radical alternative to a government actively engaged in transferring wealth from the poor to the rich.

So, in the second half of my life the question I ask myself is whether I am more likely to see government action to create the type of society I want if that government is anchored in London or in Edinburgh. And that, as they say, is something of a no-brainer. The real politik is quite simply that there is more chance of social democracy happening in an independent Scotland than in the United Kingdom – at least in what's left of my lifetime.

Thirdly, Scotland has changed. I've always believed devolution was a journey not a destination. A decade and a half after the re-establishment of the Scottish

I like the fact that I don't pay for medicine when I'm sick, that my step-daughter will be able to go to university without massive debts, that our health service is not being privatised. I like it so much I'd like some more.

Parliament it's clear that it works. I like the fact that I don't have to pay for medicine when I'm sick, that my step-daughter will be able to go to university without saddling herself with massive debts, that our health service is not being subjected to the privatisation of its English counterpart. I like it so much I'd like some more. And I know also these benefits will be short lived if the Scottish

government does not have the economic competence to underwrite them. Surely the case now needs to be made as to why a power should not be exercised in Scotland rather than why it should? The best way to do that is to vote Yes and give the Scottish government a mandate to negotiate the transfer of most spheres of public policy north of the border whilst agreeing to run things on a British level as and when that makes sense.

The last 20 years has seen the rise of a new contemporary support for independence which has little to do with its nationalist past. Looking forward and outward with a self-confidence and maturity that will see Scotland defined by what it is rather than by what it is against. ■

Tommy Sheppard is a former Deputy General Secretary of the Scottish Labour Party

The Green Activist

The Scottish Green Party is committed to a positive vision of an independent Scotland. We had a thorough discussion of this at our recent party conference, and what is below is drawn from the conclusions of that discussion.

At the heart of the debate about independence should be a discussion of how power can be dispersed. We are in favour of an autonomous and highly decentralised Scotland with a written constitution and Bill of Rights that will be in place before the transfer of powers from Westminster, and we advocate a participative and inclusive process for the development and democratic adoption of a constitution.

The Scottish Green Party believes that economies work best when control is located closest to people. Control over currency is a vital part of controlling the economy. An independent Scotland should seek to have as much control over its economy as possible, and therefore should aim to have its own currency. We recognise however that it is unrealistic that Scotland could move to a new currency immediately. We therefore want a pathway to the development of a Scottish currency, which may involve a period of continued use of Sterling but which should set an indicative timetable for ending this arrangement. We will also seek a supportive policy environment for local currencies, script and other local control over money.

The Scottish Green Party rejects the hereditary principle. We believe that there should be an elected head of state with a role to be defined in a written constitution. We recognise the value of creating this post on a ceremonial basis with ambassadorial functions, and we would welcome a broad public debate regarding any potential executive functions which the head of state might exercise.

One of the key benefits of an independent Scotland would be control of macroeconomic policy. This requires the development of a Scottish industrial strategy. This should focus on renewable

energy, jobs creation, research and development, manufacturing, and import substitution. We must focus on agricultural diversification and agrarian reform, and reform and redistribution of land and asset ownership.

Our economy should be based on social and environmental progress. This will place wellbeing ahead

of conventional GDP growth. The Scottish Green Party supports progressive personal taxation, progressive and targeted corporation tax and land value and resource taxes. We support the Robin Hood Tax. We will support consumption taxes to replace Value Added Tax. We will ensure that banking and financial services serve local economies not the forces of international capital.

We believe that there should be no weapons of mass destruction in Scotland or the world and that an independent Scotland should move immediately to remove all nuclear weapons capability from Scotland and promote a wider process of disarmament. We believe in a constitutional prohibition on the manufacture or possession of any weapon of mass destruction.

We believe in a just transition strategy to replace jobs lost through withdrawal of weapons of mass destruction and to diversify local economies. We believe in the withdrawal from NATO as soon as possible; deploying skills in mediation and reconciliation, non-violent conflict resolution, and civilian resistance. We would aim to repurpose the Scottish Regiments with new skills for new challenges, as standard bearers for Scotland's positive impact on the world.

The Scottish Green Party believes that membership of international bodies strengthens Scotland and strengthens the international community. We believe that an independent Scotland should seek to join the Nordic Union and should retain membership of the Commonwealth as a tool of international solidarity.

The Scottish Green Party is committed to internationalism, international cooperation and diminishing the significance of borders for people. We believe in freedom of

The Green vision for an independent Scotland for a democratic society with a fundamental redistribution and equalisation of power and wealth

movement for all people, and seek international cooperation to make this possible. We believe that citizenship in an independent Scotland should be inclusive and should be open to all those with Scottish birth, parentage or grand-parentage, and those who have lived in Scotland for more than five years, including an amnesty for all existing residents.

Scotland would allow citizens to continue their citizenship of the United Kingdom, or other countries. We support an open border with the United Kingdom for movement of people. There should be firm borders, though, for fiscal interactions. Greens believe there should be a European Passport, but there should be no requirement for these to be biometric or linked to ID Cards.

The Green vision for an independent Scotland is both radical and focused on a positive vision for a democratic society with a fundamental redistribution and equalisation of power and wealth. It could not be further from those visions of independence that emphasise continuity with the existing power structures and distribution of wealth. It is for a better, fairer and more socially just country. ■

Peter McColl is a Member of the Scottish Green Party

The Labour Activist

Scottish independence is the last boat out of the Titanic. Not just for Scotland, but for socialist politics.

I have spent my adult life supporting Labour, but also passionately supporting independence for Scotland. It is because of this duality that I founded the Labour for Independence movement. I truly believe that an independent, free, self-determining Scotland is not only what is best for the people of Scotland,

but also for the party I have supported for most of my life.

My earliest political memory was handing out leaflets at the 1992 General Election, and sharing the disappointment of my family at five more years of the Tories. I watched with hope at the New Labour tidal wave coming into power, only to be left with more disappointment. My convictions of a real Labour philosophy are strong, but so is the passion for what is best for my country. So much so that I have found both ideals entwined.

It's difficult to imagine what an independent Scotland would look like post 2014, but it's perhaps a little harder to envisage a Scottish Labour plan that would resonate with the Scottish people.

It is unfortunate for us Scots that we are such smart voters. In Scotland the SNP holds the majority in part due to public dissatisfaction of Scottish Labour. But in General Elections, Scots will vote for Labour in a straight choice between them and the Conservatives. It is hardly surprising then that the Westminster Labour Party see Scottish votes as safe ones and ultimately introduce policies that appeal to needed voters, mainly Middle England and London.

It therefore stands to reason that in order for the Scottish Labour Party to return to policies which are representative of the Scottish people we must strike away for the shackles of Westminster and get back to our core Labour principles. The permanent solution for this is independence.

The Better Together campaign has yet to launch any substantive reasons why we should remain together. Only that we will be worse apart. Indeed it is difficult for Yes campaigners to offer a vision of an independent Scotland until the 2016 elections. What we can promise is that it will be a Scotland based on fairer ideals of equality and social justice.

The opposition will ask us why we should take a risk, but with the UK economy in pieces, debt rising, employment falling, the cost of living increasing and further austerity measures ahead, our gamble becomes a safer bet. We need to show the people of Scotland that by having the ability to control our own economy and how we choose to spend our finances will be better for all and not the privileged few. This is an argument we can and must win.

I believe this argument alone should win out. But all pro-independence supporting groups and parties must set

out our vision for Scotland post 2014. That is why in the coming months Labour for Independence, working with willing party members and former leading Labour politicians, will set out our vision. An independent Scotland based on real Labour ideals and values. With equality, justice and fairness at the heart of what we do.

The Yes campaign reflects a rainbow of political opinion united in one common goal.

We recognise the interests of the Scottish people come before any political party. We only have an interest in representing what is right for Scotland. This takes precedence over any political institution or group.

The very notion of Scottishness is seen around the world. We are seen internationally as having different ideological values to the rest of the U.K. Speaking as someone who is not a nationalist, but rather an internationalist, the world's view of Scotland would be far greater as an independent nation. We can take a leading role in world institutions, not with guns or missiles but through our ideals, our values and our beliefs.

The referendum in 2014 is an incredible opportunity for Scotland. One in which our forefathers could only dream of. The chance of a Scotland, made by the people represented fully by a Scottish Parliament elected by the people of our nation. The chance to have a strong socialist Scotland, economically vibrant, a shining example of equality and justice on the world stage. This is chance well worth taking. It may be our last. ■

Allan Grogan is a Scottish Labour activist and founder of Labour for Independence

The Feminist

The decision we will all make in 2014 isn't a decision confined to process or procedures. It's about whether or not we believe that creating the kind of

Scotland we want to live in is best served by independence, or by staying as part of the union.

I firmly believe that for women, independence is our best bet. I haven't always believed an independent Scotland was the road we should go down. Economic fairness, equality, believing you could be whatever you wanted to be regardless of your background, your colour or your gender were the

beliefs that I held to and I thought that the only way to get closer to what I wanted was in the UK. In truth, I don't think I ever really questioned that – and maybe I too thought we couldn't do it for ourselves.

But here we are, in a country that the OECD says has the potential to be the sixth wealthiest in the world in terms of GDP but is the fourth most unequal in the western world. That gap between our potential and the reality is not new but it is one that has been growing year on year under successive Westminster governments, Labour as well as Tory.

We are also in a country that for the past 13 years has shown itself more than capable of making decisions that have charted a route profoundly in tune with who we are and what we believe.

Caring better for our older citizens, looking out for those who are more vulnerable – young and old, investing in education on the basis of a belief in its value for everyone. Protecting our health service and investing in our health. Reaching out to the world with trade and education and commerce. None of these were particularly easy decisions but they are good ones.

Our experience of 13 years of devolution shows us that we can make the move to close that gap between Scotland's potential and our current reality. And that matters to women for at

least two reasons.

Earlier this year, we learned that there are now more women in Scotland than men – 158,000 or so in fact. Women work in industry and education, in health and the arts, in the public sector and in the home. The 2010 Scottish Household Survey found that 69 per cent of men and 61 per cent of women are in some form of paid work – although the pay gap remained at 11.9 per cent.

Women are, by and large, the predominant group at the sharp end of that inequality. As carers, single parents, managers of homes and families, working in low paid jobs. Women's experience every day is of a country that is unequal. Unequal between those with power and money and those without. Unequal in health, in life span, in choices, in influence. We care deeply that our children's future lives are better than the ones we live.

But women are also educated, enterprising and entrepreneurial. We run schools and hospitals and offices. We have ideas and want to make them work in our own businesses. We want the opportunity to do that in an economy that fairly recognises our efforts.

The idea of standing on your own two feet, making your own decisions, working out how to manage competing demands, make ends meet and then stretching them a bit further, taking responsibility – all of that is the reality for most women in Scotland today.

That's independence and for women it's

not an alien idea.

We make those decisions, manage those competing demands and we take care – of family, children and neighbours and friends. We care about what happens to others. That's the 'social union' that matters.

Independence offers us a women the chance to act to change those

inequalities. But it's not a magic wand. In 1999 we were so proud of the number of women elected to our Parliament. And they made a difference. But over the years, in each successive four year term the number declined. We can take nothing for granted.

Independence offers women the chance to change the inequalities they face. It's way past time to accept the small moves that have been made and too often taken away again.

After 40 odd years, I've come to the conclusion that it's not enough to argue the rational, logical case. It's not enough to ask, nicely or otherwise. It's way past time to accept the small moves that have been made and too often, taken away again when those with power think it safe to do so. The possibility of independence can also offer us the possibility of a written constitution.

We don't have that, yet. But we could. We could have a constitution that enshrines equality and fairness. A constitution that promotes human rights with women's rights as central and sets out our responsibilities to each other.

So for me, the question now is – why not? We know we can do this. If we can improve the standards of health care, be amongst the top in world rankings for academic research and science, use our public investment wisely to become a leading country in renewable energy – then we can take one more step. Take charge of all the economic and social and fiscal powers and responsibilities of any other nation.

When we make the arguments, when we speak to the everyday experience of women in Scotland then I believe they will agree – it just makes sense. ■

Jean Freeman is a member of Women for Independence and a former Senior Adviser to Jack McConnell

The Trade Unionist

One of the questions asked of people who are supportive of Scottish independence is why? Now of course an obvious retort to that is, why not? But this is a very personal question and perhaps not one that can be easily defined. For many it's not a why, or a because; it just is. However if you take the time to get beyond the personal instinct and look at the question from a third perspective, then the answers move from being emotive, to being very much based in the real world lives of those that will be effected. A key group in the coming debate will be Scottish workers and of those, the ones that are members of trade unions will be an interesting indicator of what topics will

form the real debate.

Much of the last few months has seen a rather turgid, and uninspiring argument over process. The hope now is that perhaps with that out of the way, the real debate can take place. The referendum will clearly ask a question about sovereignty, of constitution and of institutions, but the sub-text is asking what kind of Scotland do we want? Of course on the surface that may be about who make the decisions that effect our lives, and where those decisions are made. What we actually need is to debate what Scotland will or could be like in the future. Having pictured the possibilities, the question then becomes, how best do we deliver that?

As far as the organised workforce is concerned, we have a pretty good idea of what their aspirations are. They tell us on a regular basis, including at their conferences, and in response to policies or proposals. On many topics the trade union movement is agreed. On things like the economy, on creating jobs and opportunities. On the protection of public services, on workers rights and on many international matter. Like the fact that austerity is exactly the wrong way to go about generating the sort of demand that will get the economy growing. The purpose of austerity - even superficially - is to reduce demand. If we want to grow our economy in a way that does not exacerbate the inequality that we already have, then we must create a different approach to economic growth. The construction sector know that they are a barometer for economic stability and even now despite the restrictions of devolution there is a clear difference in the outlook north and south of the border. The question is then, under which system is that different economic approach more likely; the UK or Scotland?

One of the highest profile campaigns over the last couple of years has been from those who collect the taxes that we already have in place. The PCS tell us that if they actually collected them, there would effectively be no debt crises. Most people understand that by making a contribution to a collective

body, be that a club, an association or a nation state, allows for members to be given a benefit in return. One of the problems we have as a UK is that there is a belief that it is right for those who can get away with it to pay more to their accountants than to the country. So if we

want to address the taxation system and to make it collect what is needed in a fair and progressive way, what we need to do is to change the taxation system. Which option will allow us to create a fairer taxation system; a Yes vote, or a No vote?

Trade unions in Scotland could

have a huge influence on the future ideals of the country. As a nation we seem far more comfortable with left-leaning politics. Social values still mean something and must be protected and nurtured. Each union must consider its own agenda and aspirations and then ask how best they can be delivered. For union members it may be as simple as will I have more chance of staying in work, for activist it may be more chance of achieving that change they have always campaigned for. And for union leaders it is the choice between continuing to fail to make any progress in the UK or the chance to have real influence in the future of Scotland.

The No campaign does not need a vision – we are living their future right now, with austerity, benefit cuts, unfair taxes, cuts, pensions under attack and all the rest. The Yes campaign need to emphasise that this is not about the SNP, it is about Scotland choosing Scotland's future and choosing it for the benefit of all of those who live here, not with guns or missiles but through our ideals, our values and our beliefs.

The referendum in 2014 is an incredible opportunity for Scotland. One in which our forefathers could only dream of. The chance of a Scotland, made by the people represented fully by a Scottish Parliament elected by the people of our nation. The chance to have a strong socialist Scotland, economically vibrant, a shining example of equality and justice on the world stage. This is chance well worth taking. It may be our last. ■

John Duffy is a trade union leader writing in a personal capacity

The No campaign does not need a vision – we are living their future right now, with austerity, unfair taxes, pensions under attack and all the rest



People of Scotland, vote with your heart.
Vote with your love for the Queen who nurtured you, cradle to grave,
Who protects you and cares, her most darling subjects, to whom you gave
the glens she adores to roam freely through, the stags her children so dearly enjoy
killing.
First into battle, loyal and true. The enemy's scared of you.
That's why we send you over the top with your och-aye-the-noo Mactivish there's
been a murrdderrr jings! crivvens! Deepfriedfuckinmarsbar wee wee dram of
whisky hoots mon there's a moose loose about this smackaddict
Vote, Jock. Vote, Sweaty Sock. Talk properly.
Vote with those notes we scrutinise in our shops.
(might be legal tender but looks dodgy to me)
Vote for the Highland Clearances. Baaaaaaaaaaa.
Vote for nuclear submarines in your water.
Vote for the Olympic Games you didn't vote for
(but you'll pay for it, you'll pay for it).
Vote Conservative. Vote Lib Dem. Vote Libservative. Vote Condabour.
Vote with the chip on your shoulder.
Vote Labour. New Labour. Old Labour. Scottish Labour.
(Get back in line, Scottish Labour, HQ in Solihull will issue their commands shortly,
Just keep the vote coming in from up there thanks goodbye,
Subsidy junkie).
Vote for any argument you construct in your defence being 'anti-English'.
Vote for Scots who make their career in Scotland being 'unambitious'.
Vote for enjoying your own culture being soooooooo parochial.
Vote God Save the Queen and that bit about us crushing you all.
Hush. There there.
Vote for Scotland being referred to as a 'region', like, say,
Yorkshire? Or East Anglia?
Vote for our voices dominating your media, but in no way telling
you what to think.
Take a drink. Go on, son, take a drink.
Vote for oil revenue, which we ensure flows directly from us
into you.
Vote for being told you're the only country in the world that
could not possibly survive and that without us you'd fall to
pieces like children abandoned in the wild, caked in faeces.
Vote Daily Mail and Rupert Murdoch and
illegalimmigrantskilledPrincessDiana and
London London London most exciting city in the world darling
(Glasgow **is** a very violent place, is it not. Do you have art?)
Vote with your heart. Vote Empire. Vote tradition.
Vote for our proud shared history of

enslaving other nations and stealing their natural resources

Bringing Wealth and Prosperity to the World!

being on the right side just **once** and that's only because it was against yer actual fucking Hitler

Vote for the #ScottishConspiracy at Westminster

(who really runs the show here eh – Blair, Brown – got your own in that time, we aren't allowed to vote in Holyrood but there's Archie McPhee pulling wee strings in our parliament when we wouldn't even **think** about interfering in how you run your own affairs but while we're at it, this referendum eh? A so-called referendum, is it Have it **now**, make sure it looks like **this**)

Vote for very, very, very rich people patronising you.

Vote for Glasgow having the highest knife-crime rate and lowest life expectancy in Europe

due to our generosity. You may thank us at your leisure.

Vote for the absence of your history in our schools.

All Brits together.

Vote for our shock at your ingratitude!

Vote for us saying 'Eh? Eh?' when you open up your porridge mooth.

Vote for bafflement about why you want the England football team to lose.

We always want the Scots to win (except in referenda).

Vote for psychopathic villains with your accent in a soap opera.

Vote for tuition fees and student loans, ensuring that the brightest of your working-class

(since you still insist upon the term, although Our Leaders had it banned)

will one day rise and take their place in this great land.

Vote for us deploying strategic references to Braveheart to dismiss you all.

Vote for Robert Burns being called by Paxman 'sentimental doggerel'.

Vote for The Iron Lady. Such a **strong** leader, gave this country **backbone**

(you didn't really want the unions, industries or council homes, just made the place look tatty)

Vote for a deregulated banking class, lionising of the hardworkingwealthgeneratingjobcreatingentrepreneurs

who you will in no way refer to as 'greedy, selfish bastards'. Give them your taxes.

Vote for foreign wars.

Yes, sadly, some of you will die. But you will return to a hero's welcome

Jock

the Union Jack, proud symbol of integrity and honour, draped across your coffin

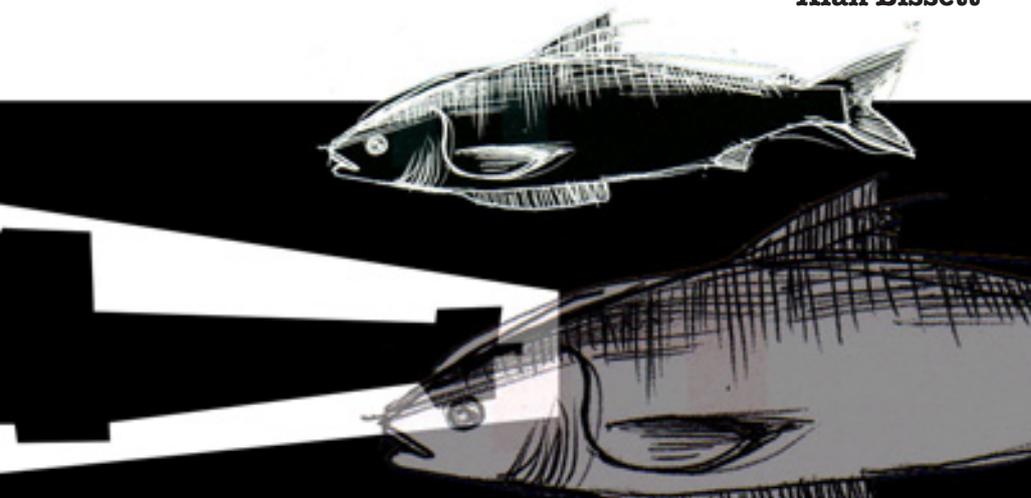
while your mother, dabbing at her eyes, recalls the words she learned in school

in Kircudbright

'There is some corner of a foreign field that is forever England.'

Vote with your heart.

Alan Bissett





Mick Whelan
General Secretary

Alan Donnelly
President

Kevin Lindsay
Scottish Officer

ASLEF the train drivers union - www.aslef.org.uk

havered on about health and safety before deciding not to lend Flora McDonald their rowing boat. Who knows? Perhaps some people even changed channels half way through Archie Gemmill's goal at the 1978 World Cup in Argentina.

I think the current mood of disinterest can be partly attributed to the fact that most people are still a bit unclear about the pros and cons of independence.

On the downside, it has been suggested that there might be border checkpoints at Carlisle. However, on the upside, there might be a duty-free shop at Gretna

for Scotland? History suggests it may not be easy. The USA had to fight a war to gain independence, as did Ireland. Indian independence was mainly brought about because Ghandi went on hunger strike to bring down the British Raj. You can hardly see Alex Salmond going on a hunger strike. It could last for years, and we could all have lost interest by the end.

Maybe a simple Yes/No referendum is too stark a question to ask.

and new Forth Road Bridge.
H: Independent from the UK, but with Scottish people still allowed to sell the Big Issue on the streets of London.

I: Independent from the UK, but with the area around Buckfast Abbey in Devon declared as sovereign Scottish territory.

J: Don't know.
K: Havnae got a clue, pal.
L: Freedom! ■

Scottish Left Review

The Scottish Left Review is a non-profit making publication. Please subscribe or make a donation by going to www.scottishleftreview.org where you can pay by credit card or by filling in your details in the form below and returning to **Scottish Left Review, 741 Shields Road, Pollokshields, Glasgow G41 4PL**

Name _____

Address _____

Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

Subscription/Donation _____

Date: _____

173

Subscriptions: £115 (waged), £112 (unwaged), £115 (local organisations), £30 (national organisations).

Donations will be gratefully received. Cheques should be crossed and made payable to: Left Review Scotland Ltd.



Say NO to ConDem cuts

For all public transport in public hands

For offshore safety

For trade-union rights

Bob Crow, General Secretary Alex Gordon, President

VLADIMIR McTAVISH'S

Kick Up The Tabloids

SCOTTISH EUROVISION ENTRY 'LIKELY TO FUEL APATHY'

Two years to go to The Referendum, and the biggest challenge facing all of Scotland is keeping the Nation interested.

The level of apathy on the subject of independence really does dismay and surprise me. This is the most important question we will

have been asked in three-hundred years and some people aren't that bothered.

In other countries people have gone to extreme lengths to try to gain freedom. Only a few months back, two people in Tibet set fire to themselves as a protest against Chinese occupation of their country. Fair enough, plenty of people in Scotland set fire to themselves every year. However, it's not normally done to make a political statement, it's normally some poor guy trying to make chips after he's got home from a night in the pub. Furthermore, the last person in Scotland who did try to make a political point by setting fire to himself got a severe kicking from a baggage handler at Glasgow Airport.

Perhaps it has always been this way, perhaps people have always been apathetic throughout Scottish history. Who knows how many people sat on the fence at Bannockburn? Possibly some people

Services. The positive of having our own contribution to the Eurovision Song Contest is likely to be less appealing when our entry is chosen from a short list of Susan Boyle, Michelle McManus, Lulu, Darius, Sheena Easton and Marti Pellow.

However, on the upside, under independence, we will have politicians who are directly answerable to the people of Scotland. On the downside, nobody knows who any of these people are. Aside from Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon, public recognition ratings of most Scottish politicians are very low. Show the average person in the street a picture of Johan Lamont and ask "Who's this?", the chances are that few would recognise her as leader of the Scottish Labour Party. Answers would range from Susan Boyle, to a professional cage-fighter, Chancellor of Germany, or Rab C. Nesbitt's wife

I reckon the following questions would serve as more appropriate Referendum for the people of Scotland.

"Please place the following options for Scotland's future in order of preference."

A: Full independence from the UK.

B: Independent from the UK while retaining membership of the European Union.

C: Independent but with Lorraine Kelly, Kirsty Wark and Michelle McManus remaining within the UK.

D: Remaining within the UK but with Gordon Ramsay being deported to a country that still has the death penalty.

E: Remaining within the UK with increased powers for the Scottish Parliament

F: Strapping the Scottish Parliament

G: Strapping the Scottish Parliament, the Edinburgh Trams

ASLEF CALLS FOR AN INTEGRATED, PUBLICLY OWNED, ACCOUNTABLE RAILWAY FOR SCOTLAND

(which used to be the SNP's position – before they became the government!)

Scottish **Left** Review

Issue 73 November/December 2012 £2.00



INDEPENDENCE...
the **red herring** of the left?

GMB

SCOTLAND

CARILLION MUST COMPENSATE BLACKLISTED WORKERS

Carillion blacklisted eight workers in Scotland—one each in Dundee, Glasgow and Irvine, two in Edinburgh and three in Livingston. They were part of 224 workers blacklisted by Carillion across the UK.

Only 198 of the 3,213 on the blacklist used by 40 companies uncovered in 2009 know they are on it leaving 3,015 not aware that they are on the list.

“It has taken years of campaigning to get companies like Carillion to drop their denials and cover up.” says GMB

Richard Howson, Carillion Chief Executive, told Building magazine in Oct 2012 that ‘Carillion is led by strong values and we take our commitment to transparency and openness extremely seriously which is why we are sorry that one of our former subsidiary businesses, Crown House Engineering, used the Consulting Association’s database to reference individuals. This was not consistent with the high standards of behaviour that we set for ourselves, based on our core values.’

Paul Kenny, GMB General Secretary said “This apology is an important first step in recognition of the disgraceful and immoral behaviour of Carillion and many other construction companies. This first step now needs to be followed up quickly by an acceptance by these companies of their responsibilities towards the people whose lives they blighted and damaged.”

Please demand that Carillion Plc follow up this apology with compensation for the 224 workers they blacklisted. 70% of the company’s work is paid for from public funds.

Keep up to date with GMB’s campaign and download the GMB report ‘BLACKLISTING – illegal corporate bullying: endemic, systemic and deep-rooted in Carillion and other companies’ from the ‘What’s New’ section on the Home Page of www.gmb.org.uk

Contact Justin Bowden, GMB National Officer at justin.bowden@gmb.org.uk or 07710 631351 or Richard Leonard, GMB Organiser at richard.leonard@gmb.org.uk or 0141 332 8641.



JOIN GMB ONLINE AT WWW.GMB.ORG.UK/JOIN

Scottish Left Review

Issue 73 November/December 2012

In this issue of the Scottish Left Review the Editorial Board has handed over editorial control of the magazine to two groups on the Scottish left. The organisers of the Radical Independence Conference are convinced that independence is the best route to a socialist Scotland. The Red Paper Collective is not. We have divided the magazine in half which you can read from either direction (just flip it over and turn it upside down). We hope this will help to inform the constitutional debate in all parts of the Scottish left.

Please note that the placement of adverts in this issue does not in any way imply advertisers' association with the views expressed in either half.

Covers and illustrations: Nadia Lucchesi - nadia.shemail@gmail.com

Scottish Left Review, 741 Shields Road, Glasgow G41 4PL . Website: www.scottishleftreview.org. Email: editorial@scottishleftreview.org

Tel: 0141 424 0042. Printed by: PrintIt Xpress Ltd, 34 High St., Linlithgow, EH49 7AE

The **Red Paper Collective** is a group of Labour Movement activists. Drawn from trade unions, politics and academia the Red Paper Collective rejects the SNP's version of independence and the policies of those who are content with the status quo. They believe that the referendum offers an opportunity to ask more far reaching questions about the future of Scotland and what type of society we want to live in

The Question Isn't Yes or No

The Red Paper Collective outline why they aren't rushing to endorse either of the constitutional options on offer

The Red Paper Collective's aim is to get beyond the sterile clash of nationalisms, Scottish and British, dominating the debate on Scotland's future. Our concern, in stark contrast to the Yes to Independence campaign and its Better Together mirror image, is on social change. The worth, or otherwise, of constitutional change is measured by what contribution it will make to advancing the interests of working people.

Therefore, the Red Paper argues it is paramount that any constitutional change is measured against its *potential* to challenge the power of capitalism and bring markets under democratic control. The purpose of achieving democratic control would be, firstly to enable a variety of forms of public ownership to build a sustainable and secure economy and secondly to redistribute wealth from the super rich to the rest of the population and geographically, from

areas of greater wealth to areas of need.

Our starting point is the Scotland we live in. As the Christie Commission put it; "This country is a paradoxical tapestry of rich resources, inventive humanity, gross inequalities, and persistent levels of poor health and deprivation". Independence, enhanced devolution, or any other constitutional change (or no change) will not by itself resolve this situation. But, it is the eradication of these and other social ills that should be the chief concern of socialists.

This approach by no means precludes support for independence – but it does mean that our scrutiny has to be of the independence that will actually be on offer, namely the version of independence being proposed by the SNP. A version which, let us be clear, will be initially predominant in an independent Scotland and within any consequent written constitution.

Any number of alternative independent Scotland's can be imagined including socialist ones, but these are not what are on offer from the SNP. It is not good enough to say that independence could allow good things to happen, especially when all the evidence suggests that it simply won't happen. Having political powers is very different from having the willingness to put those powers to use and to purposefully challenge the power of capital.

So to that extent constitutional issues are, for us, secondary and instrumental. Our concern in a constitutional debate is what will best build the capacity of workers to improve their lot and where might countervailing influences to the class power of capital most effectively be made? In this regard an examination of the Scottish economy is crucial. External institutional investors are dominant and the lines of accountability run outside Scotland. The

importance of this pattern of ownership to any democratic socialist is that it first illuminates, then determines, the level we need to intervene at.

Economic power does not lie in Scotland. It still predominantly lies at a UK level.

Of the top twenty companies in Scotland by turnover and profit – with the exception of the drinks giant William Grant & Sons which is family owned, and Scottish Water, which is publicly owned (albeit much of their operations is contracted to huge TNCs) - all the rest are public limited companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. Eleven out of the top twenty are wholly owned subsidiaries. The most recent figures show that amongst larger enterprises (defined as those employing 250 people or more) 64 per cent of employment and 78 per cent of turnover is in enterprises with ultimate ownership outside Scotland. This compares to 54 per cent of employment and 69 per cent of turnover as recently as 2002. There are, in addition, large companies such as supermarkets Asda and Tesco which are not registered in Scotland but employ many people. Scottish Government figures also show Scotland has a trade deficit with the rest of the UK of £10 billion.

Most tellingly, we export almost twice as much to England, Wales and Northern Ireland as we do to the whole of the rest of the world put together. Bearing in mind the fiscal relationship between Scotland and the rest of the UK, and the fact that Scotland is part of a single currency area too, and will be, even after independence; questions then arise about what precisely ‘independence’ would mean economically and industrially. Where is the benefit of Scottish elected representatives giving up a direct vote on the fiscal and monetary policy framework of Scotland’s largest market, its biggest economic area and the level where corporate power rests? Of course it can be done, but what would be the advantage?

The same question has also to be asked over nationalist plans to enter in corporation tax policy. The idea that what Scotland needs now is a ‘fiscal edge’ i.e. a lower tax rate for external big business is music to Rupert Murdoch’s ears but the left cannot be sanguine about such plans

Whilst for nationalists more powers for Holyrood are axiomatically a good thing, this can’t be an automatic

assumption by socialists. One function of the UK is ensuring a flow of resources throughout the UK. Scotland has benefitted from this in the past - and may do again in the future. The Devo-Max slogan that “all the money raised in Scotland stays in Scotland” is perhaps suited to particularly egregious charity appeals - it’s not one that the left should rush to endorse. The principle of resources going to where they are needed is one that socialists should support.

That Scottish independence could be a force not for cross border radicalism but the opposite is a real concern. The British Social Attitude Survey shows Scotland as being a bit more social democratic in outlook than England as a whole - but not hugely so. (And once England is looked at on a regional basis, Scotland looks markedly less exceptional.) But, like in England, the extent to which people identify with those values has been declining in recent years.

Attitudes can and do change. Sixty years ago a majority of Scots voted Conservative. Go back a further fifty years to the early days of the ILP, we find that Keir Hardie had to move to London to get elected. In Scotland as elsewhere, progressive values did not come easily. They had to be fought for – and were/are reversible.

In current circumstances, the *process* of negotiating independence would itself tend to shift attitudes away from those of class solidarity. There would be immediate conflicts over the allocation of resources and debt. The SNP’s economic policy is based on attracting investment away from other parts of Britain. Given the complete control of Scotland’s press and media by external big business, the potential for the erosion of progressive and socialist class values would be considerable.

The Red Paper argues the radical potential of independence has been massively oversold; particularly as Scotland would still be subject to the

neoliberal discipline of the EU. We do however acknowledge that constitutional change offers scope for advance. Dave Watson here and in previous Red Paper publications outlines changes to taxation and borrowing which would serve to both expand the powers of the Scottish Parliament and provide a platform for improving people’s lives. Jackson Cullinane proposes the devolution of control of the HSE to deal with the

specific industrial make up of Scotland. But the progressive potential of these proposals would remain unrealised unless there were political actors and agents willing to deploy them, to borrow to invest, to energise a Scottish HSE etc.

Developing forces capable of ensuring that these and similar proposals of the sort Red Paper members suggest here and elsewhere have suggested would surely be a better

use of the a labour movement’s time and resources than signing up to be foot-soldiers in one or other of the bourgeois campaigns currently vying for attention.

The Better Together campaign offers only a blind Unionism - as nationalist in its way as the equally sightless, Yes campaign (with its contention that “fairness” is a Scottish virtue and in the same breath citing support from tax dodging millionaire Jim McColl). Neither of these campaigns, we would argue, deserves encouragement or endorsement from socialists.

In an era of crisis, misty eyed patriotism of any stripe is a diversion that the labour movement cannot afford. Our task is to apply ourselves to advancing the cause of working people. In doing that the most urgent question facing us is not the flag- and identity-based one of “Yes or No”. It is the class based one “How can working people gain economic power?”. ■

Neither the Yes or No campaigns deserves encouragement or endorsement from socialists. The question facing us is not the flag- and identity-based one of “Yes or No”. It is the class based one “How can working people gain economic power?”.

The Red Paper Collective
www.redpaper.net

Power to the Workers

Elaine Smith outlines the challenge for socialists and explains why she will be voting No in the referendum

In 1972 Jimmy Jack, STUC general secretary, said he was in favour of a Scottish Parliament because “there is not the slightest shadow of doubt that it will be a workers’ Parliament.” Nearly a decade later, George Foulkes proclaimed “there is an inherent socialist bias in devolution.”

The early advocates of Home Rule, like Kier Hardie, no doubt held similar hopes for devolution. Unfortunately, this has not been the reality with our Scottish Parliament: since 1999 successive governments have simply been putting sticking plasters on broken limbs. So is it time for socialists in Scotland to support taking the leap from devolution to independence?

Personally, if I thought that such a risky move would result in a Scottish socialist republic then I might be more sympathetic to the notion. Indeed, at one time although not a proponent, I was fairly relaxed about independence. However, my experience in the Scottish Parliament over the past 13 years means that I will be unequivocally voting No in the referendum in 2014.

It’s being argued that socialists shouldn’t worry that the SNP are proposing to keep the Monarchy, lower corporation tax, stay in NATO etc. since this can all be changed afterwards. However, that line fails to recognise that the settlement will be based on a written constitution which will be extremely difficult to alter afterwards, even if the political will was there to do so.

So, we must judge independence on whether or not under current proposals it would make any difference to the left’s aspiration for a socialist system. The

push towards it in some circles seems to be based on a reaction to government policies rather than an argument around national identity.

I believe that for socialists the struggle for the rights of workers, and the socialist system that would empower them, must always be our top priority and our motivation for change. For nationalists, that is not the case and everything else comes second to the national question. Or as Alex Neil put it “So the challenge for nationalists isn’t just to persuade many more people of the case for independence but to get them to realise that it should be their number one priority.”

I’ve never been particularly clear about the definition of what it is to be Scottish rather than British. It’s not based on language, since we have several and the main one we share with the rest of

Britain. If we try to then base it on lines on the map, those can change over time. Regions can fragment into localities and even those can have separate settlements.

There can be ‘tribalism’ where people in one town or community openly dislike and distrust those from another or see themselves as different. Class distinctions also separate people living in Scotland just as they do elsewhere in Britain. There are major complexities and contradictions amongst the Scottish people and national identity is a multi-dimensional concept which I don’t believe provides a

satisfactory blueprint for Scotland’s future.

From a labour movement perspective, both the STUC and the Labour Party have home rule policies but neither has promoted independence,

preferring to battle for the working class as part of a Britain wide struggle.

In that regard, one major period of advancement was the election of Attlee’s 1945 Labour Government. They instigated social change that benefitted the working class right across Britain with the NHS, a massive council house building programme and the nationalisation of key industries. For socialists, the debate now must focus on the kind of Scotland we want to achieve rather than narrow nationalism.

The Scottish Parliament has never used its existing powers to the full to fundamentally shift Scotland towards an economic system that benefits the many not the few, with the eradication of poverty at its heart. This is despite having self-proclaimed left of centre governments since its inception.

Therefore, in what way would an independent Scotland be any different, particularly when one of the main policy changes would likely be a race to the bottom on corporation tax?

These themes and others will be explored by my comrades from the Red Paper Collective in their contributions. Further powers within the existing settlement would allow the opportunity for a future Scottish Government to pursue a socialist system. However, based on past form, there doesn’t seem to be any indication of a move away from a neo-liberal agenda in the near future. Forcing that to change is where the efforts of socialists should be focused; not on arguing with each other about national identity.

Our number one priority must be the class struggle, not nationalism. Or, in the words of Nye Bevan in 1952, “Where does power lie in this particular State of Great Britain and how can it be attained by the workers?” ■

The Scottish Parliament has never used its existing powers to the full to fundamentally shift Scotland towards an economic system that benefits the many not the few. In what way would an independent Scotland be any different?

Elaine Smith is Labour MSP for Coatbridge & Chryston and is currently Deputy Presiding Officer. She is Convener of Scottish Labour’s Campaign for Socialism, is on the board of the Scottish Left Review and the Scottish Organising Committee of the People’s Charter.

Maybe - Make a Choice

Stephen Smellie argues that neither the Yes nor No campaigns have given the left a compelling reason for their support

Either an independent Scotland with a low Corporation tax to attract low wage jobs from the north of England and Ireland, Council Tax frozen to benefit the middle classes and mansion dwellers, where Donald Trump can build golf courses wherever he chooses and the Queen visits each year as Head of State.

Or Scotland “better together” with the Tories in a state that refuses to interfere with the rights of bankers to get their bonuses for speculatively gambling with other people’s money, bigots determine immigration policy through the Daily Mail, taxation remains resolutely regressive, public policy is to privatise and hope market forces can be tamed by wishful thinking and bosses can be persuaded to pay better wages. The Queen remains Head of a Trident obsessed State.

In both options the economy is controlled by the City of London, US and other foreign corporations, the European Union’s neoliberal policies prevent the state interfering in the market by regulation or nationalisation and due to membership of NATO we remain committed to the preparation for and participation in foreign wars for US interests.

Here is your ballot paper. Please mark a cross and put your paper in the box. No, there are no other options.

Such is the likely choice come the referendum and neither option is worth getting out of bed for. Certainly we will not have a choice between a Scottish socialist republic, on the one hand and, on the other, a Red Paper vision of a devolved United Kingdom determined to challenge the neoliberal policies of the EU and the power of big business to achieve significant redistribution of wealth.

We therefore have people of the left arguing for a Yes or a No vote not on the basis of what will be on offer but what, crystal ball gazing, might be able to be achieved in future. The left Yes people promise we will be able to swing the SNP to the left, maybe even see a re-invigorated Labour Party, which will create a socially just Scotland. The left No people argue that winning the

struggle to reclaim the Labour Party will lead to a strong Labour Government in Westminster that will transform society and challenge the European and City of London vested interests.

From where we sit now, two years from a referendum, neither left options look particularly credible. The left Yes argument presumes a huge turnaround in SNP economic policy immediately after a huge endorsement of that policy in the referendum. The left No argument has the weakness that the battle to regain the Labour Party has made no discernible progress in a long time and, with Johan Lamont’s review of universal services, looks like being lost even in Scotland.

Where does that leave the rest of us who share the vision of a fairer and just Scotland but are unconvinced either way? If none of our preferred options are on offer do we put aside our prejudices (our antipathy to petty Scottish nationalism and/or British jingoism for example), hold our nose and decide what the least bad option is?

When we debate ‘left perspectives on the constitution’ I believe the priority is to develop the ‘left perspective’ not any one constitutional arrangement. Class issues should take precedence. The best outcome in the referendum would be the option that gives the left the best chance of succeeding in shifting wealth and power to our class. That is, the option that gives the best chance

of building a strong left movement in opposition to the political establishment either in the UK or an independent Scotland. Now, a lot of us have been voting for the least bad option in elections for years so it shouldn’t be such a big issue to consider the question now.

But what is the least bad option?

UNISON, other trade unions and the STUC are seeking to influence the debate through engagement with members and campaigning publicly. The aim is that issues of social and economic justice, addressing inequality and distribution of wealth, public services for public good not private profit, for shifting resources from military to peaceful purposes, are central to the debate. So that politicians selling any constitutional option are forced to answer the question of what they will do with the powers they seek, or want to keep, in order to achieve a fairer, more just Scotland.

How will they control the banks? Will they bring back into public ownership the railways and prevent more of our services, like water, being

privatised? How will they respond to the control that the EU has over economic and labour policy that currently would prevent either the UK or Scotland from carrying out policies to control finance, nationalise rail, enforce the Living Wage through procurement and block European companies winning contracts by undercutting labour costs? Will they repeal the anti-trade union laws? Will they defend universal services as part of a drive to create a more equal society? Will they ensure Trident is scrapped and we no longer waste billions and the

lives of many service personnel in wars for imperialist causes?

Do they have the will to undertake these progressive policies and will their preferred constitutional settlement actually have the powers to achieve these aims?

If the Yes and No campaigns are successful in shifting the debate we will be better able to decide what option is likely to offer the best vehicle to get us to the Scotland we want. The left could usefully spend its time asking these questions.

If these campaigns are successful in shifting the debate we will be better able to decide what option is likely to offer the best vehicle to get us to the Scotland we want. The left could usefully spend its time asking these questions and, from

their perspective in the Yes/No debate, giving us credible answers that are neither 'that is for the people of Scotland to decide' nor 'we are better together addressing these issues'.

Until then the best left position should be "maybes ye, maybes naw." ■

Stephen Smellie is Depute-Convenor of UNISON Scotland

Taxation, redistribution and solidarity

Dave Watson looks at how constitutional change could deliver a more progressive tax system to fund greater social justice

In this article I will consider what constitutional changes might achieve a more progressive socialist approach to taxation and redistribution.

The new status quo as set out in the Scotland Act 2012 does provide for a Scottish income tax to replace part of the UK income tax although without the ability to vary rates between bands. While it is an improvement on the current position and does give the option of increasing taxation, it still places significant constraints on developing a more progressive system. I would therefore argue that we do need to consider constitutional change through either independence or extended devolution.

INDEPENDENCE

Independence does of course offer the opportunity to introduce a progressive tax system. However, it is not what could be introduced post-independence that matters, but what those advocating it will do and how they will achieve it. The problem for the Radical Independence position is that it's firmly in the 'could' camp. The political parties involved, with the very modest exception of the Greens, have no MSPs and virtually no elected representatives of any description.

So the real world of independence is that defined by the SNP and while I accept they have a positive line on social policy, their economic policy, including taxation, is firmly of the political right. Their plan is to keep the pound within a Sterling zone, together with various business friendly polices including a Corporation Tax cut to give Scotland a 'fiscal edge'.

Handing over monetary policy to

the rest of the UK limits the scope of fiscal policy, including a more progressive taxation system, even if there was the political will. If the key economic levers are controlled by another country, then there is less influence on monetary, and fiscal, policy than under devolution. In any event a Corporation Tax cut to give Scotland a 'fiscal edge' is pure right wing Laffer curve economics. It simply doesn't stack up as other small countries like Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland all have higher Corporation Tax and better performing economies. Multi-national corporations are not interested in even halving Corporation Tax; they want to pay no tax, as many currently do through the use of tax havens.

With this 'business friendly' approach we do have to seriously question if an independent Scotland would tackle the evil of tax dodging. We will be able to test this next year when we see the Scottish Government's response to proposals by UNISON and others to take aggressive tax avoidance into account in public procurement. We have also heard very little about the SNP's position on progressive personal taxation.

If the same Laffer curve economics are to be applied, then watch out for the Flat Tax.

EXTENDED DEVOLUTION

If we look at other European countries that devolve fiscal powers, taxes on income are the most popular, followed by property and then taxes on consumption.

In the latest Red Paper pamphlet I have argued that fiscal devolution might support a more radical social and economic strategy. Property based taxes will largely be devolved after the Scotland Act 2012 is implemented. To this I would fully devolve Income Tax and National Insurance to enable a banding system that better reflects Scottish income distribution and progressive policy direction. Business

taxes should remain at UK level because tax competition simply encourages a race to the bottom. Consumption taxes (primarily VAT) again largely at UK level as EU rules don't allow variable rates in the same state. Finally, there should be full prudential borrowing powers including bond issuance.

I accept that the issue of political will is just as relevant here, as Scottish Labour has not yet developed a narrative

I would argue Scotland needs and wants high quality, generally universal public services, funded by progressive taxation and businesses that pay their taxes. However, you can't have Scandinavian services on US tax rates. 'Scandimerica' is fantasy economics.

on devolution if Scotland rejects independence.

SOLIDARITY

With the focus of debate on independence and extended devolution we should not lose sight of the value of fiscal solidarity across the UK. Poverty with a kilt on is still poverty. Allocating resources on the basis of need happens in other European countries using mechanisms like shared taxation, hypothecated spending and equalisation mechanisms. Greater fiscal autonomy must still allow for resource transfer

to areas of need across the UK. In particular we need to recognise where real economic power lies and even under independence, it isn't here in Scotland.

For all the debate around fiscal powers we need to return to the question of what we want these powers for. Fiscal policy should support the creation of a more equal society that allocates resources to tackle poverty through progressive taxation and welfare support. The role of business is to pay taxes, provide decent jobs and social sustainability in return for state support. The state then promotes

collective ownership and management of the means of production.

In conclusion, I would argue Scotland needs and wants high quality, generally universal public services, funded by progressive taxation and businesses that pay their taxes. However, you can't have Scandinavian services on US tax rates. 'Scandimerica' is fantasy economics. ■

Dave Watson is the Head of Bargaining and Campaigns at UNISON Scotland

The Role of International Organisations

Any attempt to move to the left requires a strategy for dealing with the forces of global capitalism argues Vince Mills

There is a general consensus that Scotland could survive as an independent state. The question facing us from a left wing perspective is what kind of state would that be? Would it advance the prospects of transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor? Would it facilitate or impede the majority of the population owning the means of generating wealth, including democratic ownership of the financial institutions that have served us so poorly in the recent past. Would it allow us to switch resources away from the 'financialisation' of the economy to the productive economy? And would it allow us to restore union rights so that we could fight for all of the preceding measures?

Scotland's ability to do these things is heavily predicated on the international context and in particular its relationship to the key international institutions that police the actions of states to ensure the dominance of global capitalism and more precisely the principles of neoliberalism. These bodies make no secret about this. The World Trade Organisation with 157 member states says very clearly:

"The WTO agreements cover goods, services and intellectual property. They spell out the principles of liberalization, and the permitted exceptions. They include individual countries' commitments to lower customs tariffs and other trade

barriers, and to open and keep open services markets."

According to the World

Development Movement it was pressure from the IMF, World Bank and WTO on Latin America and Africa to liberalise trade in the 1980s and 1990s that saw their economies stagnate and poverty increase. If the stance of the WTO seems restrictive or indeed intrusive, it pales into insignificance when the EU is considered.

Why should the left view the EU with suspicion? The answer is straight forward according to the Marxist writer Stephen Gill; "economic and monetary union has, since the early 1990s, constitutionalized neoliberal discipline within the EU and contributed to the formation of a... 'transnational historical bloc', which socially and politically embeds neoliberalism."

In concrete terms, EU commitment to neoliberalism has meant the imposition of the politics

of austerity and global initiatives like the Mode 4 Policy. Its inclusion in the international trade agenda allows transnational corporations (TNCs) to profit from the cross border wage differentials, national insurance exemptions, tax juggling etc. and to

stop workers unionising.

This is only the most recent in a long list of anti trade union actions. Consider European Court of Justice decisions on the Laval/Viking/Ruffert/Luxemburg cases, all of which have undermined workers' capacity to defend wages and conditions

Scotland's ability to do these things is heavily predicated on the international context and in particular its relationship to the key international institutions that police the actions of states to ensure the dominance of global capitalism and more precisely the principles of neoliberalism

and indeed the very notion of a 'Social Europe' by giving clear precedence to

freedom to make profit over fundamental trade union rights. What was left of the Social Europe aspiration was furthered bludgeoned by the 2012 Treaty for Stability Coordination and Governance under which the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) assistance is disbursed.

States receiving ESM funding are required to introduce reform measures as stipulated by the EU Commission. This applies to Greece and Portugal - and would apply to Italy and Spain if they seek such funding. The Treaty also reduces the maximum annual deficit for all states to 0.5 per cent and requires all states to write its provisions into their constitutions. Indeed Berlin is now advocating that the EU's 27 countries consider pooling more economic sovereignty. What freedom would an independent Scotland have to advance a socialist or even social democratic project under those arrangements? And that is without even considering what Scotland would have to include in its constitution

if it had to join the EU as a new state, requiring among other things, the inclusion of the terms of the 2012 treaty.

It is important to make the point here that the EU is not open to the democratic pressure you would associate with campaigns against governmental actions in Britain. The EU is not a state. Rather, in the words of Mathew MacDonald, it is a "vehicle for the collective interests of its member states". Whose decisions are agreed out-with the democratic processes of the member states concerned, and which increasingly seek to impose fiscal and policy positions on peoples who, as the Greeks and Spanish working class movements have shown on the streets, are not an expression of the will of those peoples.

We have to question, then, whether it is likely, or even possible for Scotland to survive as a genuinely independent country with a political agenda that is hostile to the supra national institutions insistent on the necessity of neoliberalism.

Its heavily externally-owned economy, its very openness (itself a consequence of the British neoliberal project) the likely continued dominance of the power of financial capital in London (the less likely to see a political challenge because of Scottish secession); all of this suggests that it is only by resurrecting the spirit of 1945, not 1745, that we are likely to create conditions for a challenge to capital that can fend off the global capitalist predators.

I write this without the slightest doubt that that project - winning Britain to a radical anti-neoliberal project - is also monumental, but the proposals in the Red Paper set out a feasible strategy of how the combined political and economic strength of the British working class can be used to forge a social and economic alternative capable of challenging the global might of capital. ■

Vince Mills is Chair of the Campaign for Socialism

Trident, Scotland and the Referendum

The apparent power of Scottish independence to disarm Trident must face serious scrutiny argues Alan Mackinnon

In the event of Scotland voting for independence, finding a new site for Trident would be extremely difficult and prohibitively expensive. That could tip the balance against a Trident project which is already deeply unpopular. But a more likely response from a UK government, which had already lost around one third of its territory and around a tenth of its population, could be its determination to ensure that its global 'status' would not be further eroded by being forced to abandon its nuclear weapons.

After a vote in favor of independence, the Scottish government would be involved in discussions on a range of difficult issues to determine the terms of separation and the share that Scotland would assume of UK assets and liabilities. A Scottish government, which was reducing corporation tax to attract inward investment, would struggle

to maintain the current level of public spending that sustains much of Scotland's workforce and services.

The UK government strategy would be to play for time. It would be likely to offer Scottish government generous inducements to retain Faslane and Coulport as bases for the Trident fleet for a limited period in the hope that a new Scottish government would be elected which would agree to keep it long term. According to a report in the Telegraph in January 2012, MoD officials believe that ministers in London would have no choice but to "pay Salmond any price to ensure we kept access to (the Clyde bases)". A UK government could offer up to £2bn a year as rental for basing Trident - money which could be invested in health and education at a time of austerity.

As Professor Malcolm Chalmers has argued,

"I don't think the SNP would have to agree to keep Trident forever. But if they want a post-referendum agreement with the UK, then they would probably need to agree to allow London enough time to plan and build alternative facilities."

And that could take 10 years. Perhaps that is what Angus Robertson means when he talks about negotiating "the speediest safe transition of the nuclear fleet from Faslane". Such an arrangement could be sold to the Scottish public as a good deal for Scotland and only necessary for a limited period; but it would meet with fierce opposition from the peace movement.

Additional pressure would come from the United States, which has long considered Britain's four Trident submarines as a direct extension of its own strategic submarine force of 14 Trident vessels. It would be unlikely

to give up such an asset without using every point of leverage at its command - diplomatic, political and economic.

More pressure could come from Europe. Britain's Trident strike force, unlike the French 'Force de Frappe', is assigned to NATO and is the core part of the alliance's nuclear policy. A Scottish Government that wanted to remain a member of NATO would be in a weak bargaining position. It is true that new NATO members are not forced to host nuclear weapons on their soil. But here the issue would be entirely different - a newly independent part of an existing member state which happens to host the deployment sites for the alliance's strategic nuclear weapons strike force. An independent Scotland which wanted rid of Trident could thus wipe out a 'core element' of NATO's strategic concept. Right on, you might say. But it is hardly likely that the NATO civilian and military leaders would stand by and watch that happen without using every means at their command to stop it, far less welcome Scotland into the NATO fold under these circumstances.

Having an independent foreign policy would be difficult as an EU member, but as a member of NATO it would be quite impossible. NATO is often described by its critics as a 'relic of the Cold War', but sadly it is far more sinister. Its steady expansion eastwards and southwards more than twenty years after the end of the Cold War reveals its true purpose. It is not about countering any perceived threat to Europe or North America. NATO's Strategic Concept admits the risk of this is 'low'. It is a

vehicle for binding member countries into support for US foreign policy and for global intervention. It recently reaffirmed the concept of nuclear 'deterrence' and the first use of nuclear weapons.

NATO is also committed to building a new and destabilising missile defence system to cover the continent of Europe despite the lack of any significant external threat. Its member states continue to be embroiled in the bloody war and occupation of Afghanistan. The calls from three member states - Germany, Holland and Belgium - to have US tactical nuclear weapons removed from their soil are ignored. Why should the reaction to an independent Scotland's request to join NATO but get rid of NATO's strategic nuclear strike force be any different? The truth is that membership of NATO would place new and formidable obstacles in the way of an independent Scotland divesting itself of nuclear weapons.

Remember that opinion polls across Britain continue to show a clear majority of the population opposed to replacing Trident. In the countdown to 2014 there are dangers in us becoming mesmerised

by the referendum and adopting a 'wait for independence' attitude which could

disarm the peace movement and prevent us from building alliances at a time when the coalition government is deeply divided on Trident. Nor should we be diverted from attempting to shift the position of the Labour leadership at British and Scottish levels to an anti-Trident position before the next General Election in 2015 and consolidating

the opposition of the Liberal Democrats to Trident.

The ultimate decision about Trident will be taken by a Westminster government and so it would be very unwise to lose the focus of the campaign on that body. An independent Scottish Government which demanded the removal of these weapons from Scotland could, of course, play a big part in the process. But we cannot assume that such a government will resist the immense political and economic pressures which would be applied from the UK, the US and NATO. ■

Alan Mackinnon is a former chairman of Scottish CND

Unions and the Constitution

A trade unionist never signs a deal until they have looked at the detail argues Jackson Cullinane. The same is true of the referendum.

Based on the views expressed in the STUC's series of consultation meetings and in similar consultations organised by individual unions, there are a diverse range of opinions being expressed among trade unionists in relation to the question of Scotland's constitutional future.

The majority however currently appear to favour options short of independence but distinct from a

'unionist' standpoint. Within Unite, whilst a definitive position will not be reached until we know the final form of the question(s) to be posed in the referendum, polls of our members recorded almost 60 per cent favouring the inclusion of a question on more devolution (although not necessarily the SNP's version of 'devo max' with only 22% declaring support for the devolution of everything except defence and foreign

affairs).

This pro-devolution but not 'nationalist' standpoint (only around 10 per cent of the members polled indicated firm support for independence) is in line with a pro-Home Rule current in the Labour and Trade Union movement stretching back to Keir Hardie and the ILP, through the STUC's convening of the first Scottish Assembly on the back of the UCS work-in, to the pivotal role

played by trade unionists in the delivery of the Scottish Parliament.

It should be no surprise that trade unionists are unconvinced by the case for independence as promoted by the Scottish Government against the backdrop of our immediate priorities of resisting cuts in wages, jobs and services. In response to questions around what share of the UK public finances will be available to Scotland for investment in jobs and services, we are often told that such issues will be “subject to negotiation post independence”.

Trade Union members, used to scrutinising ‘the deal’ before decision, will always be uncomfortable with a leap of faith into the unknown. A shift rightwards by the SNP Government, as evidenced by their growing closeness to millionaires, recent commitments to ‘cutting red tape’, the dropping of commitments to the Scottish Living Wage and training standards from proposals on public procurement, an economic policy predicated on cash incentives for businesses and cuts in corporation tax and the announcement of derisory ‘offers’ on public sector pay, post pay freeze, will make our members less convinced. They should also be concerned by a commitment to seek

Trade union activists are also unlikely to be inspired by a “no” coalition involving the Tories and perceived as favouring the “status quo”. Labour, as the party of devolution, historically rooted in the trade union movement, needs to present a more distinct pro-progressive change position.

Scottish membership of the European Union, given the anti-trade union line of the Viking and Laval judgements, the so-called Monti II proposals and the EU’s promotion of competition and privatisation.

However, trade union activists are also unlikely to be inspired by a “no” coalition involving the Tories and perceived as favouring the “status quo”. Labour, as the party of devolution, historically rooted in the trade union movement, needs to

present a more distinct pro-progressive change position. There is ample scope for considering additional powers that could enhance employment rights, such as devolving more control over health and safety enforcement given the fact that Scotland has more workplace fatalities, more serious injuries and fewer prosecutions of negligent employers than any other area of the UK. Such a move would also counter the savage cuts being enacted in the UK-wide HSE involving the removal of inspections in Scotland’s most dangerous industries such as agriculture and construction. Similarly, there is an anomaly that Scotland has its own judicial system but not full control of employment tribunals, a power which could develop a fairer system free from the lodging fees, compensation caps

and other restrictions introduced at Westminster.

An examination of what further powers could be devolved would necessitate a consideration of how the existing powers are utilised and how power could be further devolved to local community and workplace level. Proposals on public procurement could include measures to prevent public contracts going to companies who operate blacklists against trade unionists. Local Government could be given powers to administer the re-regulation of bus services. Co-operative ownership could be encouraged as an alternative to profit driven private ownership, with workers trained and supported to apply a form of workers control. Further land reform could provide communities with a genuine right to own and direct local economic development.

The historical support of the trade union movement for Home Rule was based on a class position, recognising the need to build unity with comrades elsewhere in the UK (and internationally) whilst decentralising and re-distributing power. There can be little progress for the working class if the outcome of the constitutional debate is a Scotland where big business, exercising control from outwith Scotland, is enticed by tax breaks and de-regulation. Whilst in the rest of the UK, unaccountable executive government, the House of Lords and an increased Tory majority prevails.

As Keir Hardie said, “to the Socialist the state is the people”. To what extent power is shifted in favour of our class should be the criteria that trade unionists apply in considering the options for change in Scotland. ■

Jackson Cullinane is Political Officer of Unite Scotland, writing in a personal capacity

The Possible Other World

With widespread discontent and an economy in crisis now is the time for fundamental change argues Richard Leonard

There is widespread discontent in society and a crisis in the functioning of our economy.

That is why fundamental change

is needed and trade unions, not least as the best organised force in the wider movement for social justice as well as the voice of workers in and against the

current economic order, have a critical role to play. Unions are, after all, at their best when not simply getting the best deal for their members from the current

economic and social system, but striving for its radical and irrevocable change.

We know that work itself brings not only exploitation but alienation too, so our goal is a humanisation of the economy. That means liberation at work with more democracy in the workplace and a shift in power from those who happen to own the economy to those who work in it. In short a rebalancing from capital to labour. This is not to be depicted as anti business, but anti the accumulation of great private wealth and power.

That will require us to challenge the centralised private ownership of the means of production and realise the full potential of public and social ownership.

Take larger companies which are registered in Scotland (that is those employing 250 or more employees). Whilst they only make up 1.5 per cent of all enterprises, they employ as much as half of the workforce in Scotland's private sector and generate almost two-thirds of turnover. Significantly too 82 per cent of them are owned outside of Scotland.

Allowing the control of the means of production and distribution to remain in minority hands has given us dominant corporations, most of whom are run via the London Stock Exchange and increasingly directed by overseas boardrooms. This is not free enterprise but monopolistic capital and a cause of inequality which needs to be tackled at its root. As the root lies outside Scotland, political independence would hinder not help our ambitions.

So what's our vision of the future and what do we need to do to secure it?

In the public sector, most obviously in local government and public bodies like Scottish Water, we need to replace out-sourcing and contractorisation with in house delivery. We need to extend common ownership; not in the direction of an

old centralised command economy but a new co-operative commonwealth.

Energy including renewable energy and transport, most obviously the railways, which run in any case on huge public subsidy should be placed under democratic socialised ownership.

The role of the state should be to protect society against domination by big capital, yet we seldom see it.

The pharmaceutical industry (for the first time over a £1 billion was spent on prescribed drugs in Scotland in 2011/12), the military industrial complex (UK defence spending at 2.6 per cent of GDP is the fourth biggest in the world behind the USA, China and France), even agri-businesses and big landowners (in the decade from 1999 to 2009 Scottish based recipients netted five billion euros of EU farm subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy)

are all feeding from the life-spring of public expenditure.

And then, of course, there are the banks, bailed out at a cost of billions in the protection of toxic assets (£497 billion of them from the RBS and HBOS Legacy Lending Book alone!) . It's time that we had the confidence to use the power we have. We should for example take control of the banks we own, strip out the speculators and run them for the common good.

In Italy the Marcora Law gives workers the statutory right to bid for their place of work if it is facing closure. In Scotland the Land Reform Act gives communities the right to bid for land when it is put up for sale.

Why not give workers and communities the statutory right to bid for their place of work when it is put up for sale, facing closure or asset stripping?

In the private sector we need a dose of democratic accountability and new limitations on the tyranny of the few over the many. These limits, to be enforced directly by active government intervention, but also through permissive reforms, bestow new rights for workers and their unions. This should include the

democratisation of pension and insurance funds through which working people own but don't control many of those commanding heights. But it also means ending the master/servant relationship, which still underpins our employment laws and rethinking ways of growing workers control as a means of extending democracy.

Pension Funds, trade unions, the currency, even the commanding heights of the Scottish economy these are all principally organised at a UK level. So political independence, whilst of course possible, would not bring economic democracy nearer, quite the opposite. By withdrawing from the level where economic power lies we would be abandoning our overarching aim which is to bring about a radical change to economic and so power relations.

The vision we need is of a democratic socialist future, built on a decentralisation of power, based on the principle of community, co-operative ownership of the productive base, the subordination of the economy to social, ecological and ethical ends. A society built on peace not war, the advancement of knowledge and education, international co-operation and an end to inequality and poverty.

This other world is possible. It is also absolutely necessary. ■

Richard Leonard is GMB Scotland's Political Officer, a former chairperson of the Scottish Labour Party, he was Scottish Labour's candidate for Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley in the 2011 Scottish Parliament Elections

We know that work itself brings not only exploitation but alienation too, so our goal is a humanisation of the economy. That means liberation at work with more democracy in the workplace and a shift in power from those who happen to own the economy to those who work in it.

A Federal Answer to Britain

A federal constitution for the UK can turn diversity into a means of strengthening the power of working people argues Pauline Bryan

A radical alternative for Scotland should start from the premise that the power of capitalism and the use of markets can be brought under democratic control. The purpose of achieving democratic control would be to enable a variety of forms of public ownership, to build a sustainable and secure economy and to redistribute wealth from the super rich to the rest of the population and geographically, from areas of greater wealth to areas of need. Neither an independent Scotland nor the status quo can deliver this. It will require a fundamental transformation of our democratic structures.

The devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly has broken the centralised grip of Westminster on UK policies, but we may be faced, instead, with four neo-liberal economies vying with each other to be the lowest taxed and the lowest paid. We need to turn the diversity into a means of strengthening the power of working people.

The early pioneers in the STUC and the Labour Party in Scotland adopted internationalism as their ideal, but wanted to devolve some of Westminster's powers by creating a democratic federal Britain. The Labour Movement's position, unlike the nationalist one, acknowledged the bonds the British working class had forged in more than a century's political struggle and recognised shared class interests over and above the shared interest of living in Scotland. Far from wanting to separate from the English they wanted to join with working people across the Islands in creating a socialist alternative.

Now that we have the Scottish Parliament, Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies we have the basis for a federal arrangement with power devolved within the UK, but with the strength of a single Parliament dealing with macro economic issues and international relations. This dual approach will allow variations in policy within the constituent parts, but retain the combined strength to operate within the global economy.

What might a democratic federalist arrangement mean for Scotland? For a

start it would resolve the West Lothian question. Scottish representatives would have the right to vote on issues that impacted on the UK as a whole and on Scotland in particular. They would not have the right to vote on issues that relate only to England or other parts of the UK. It would however safeguard the ability to redistribute wealth within the UK and allow the labour movements in the whole UK to collaborate in resisting attacks on working people. It would lessen the likelihood of a race to the bottom in making Scotland a low pay, low corporation tax economy. It would reduce the extent of the London-centric nature of the Westminster Parliament which is as damaging to Lancashire as it is to Lanarkshire.

Fiscal devolution would allow a progressive approach to taxation giving the Scottish Government powers to redistribute wealth within Scotland, but also allow for redistribution within the UK. The power held by the Scottish Parliament could be used more flexibly to create a fairer tax system both nationally and locally that can improve public services and the pay and conditions of public employees and make requirements on private sector employers to pay a living wage.

The capacity to borrow for capital and revenue purposes must go well beyond the limits set out in the Scotland Act and should be used to end the Scottish Parliament's dependence on PPP, PFI or the Non-profit Distributing Projects of the present Scottish Government. Subsidies to

private corporations must come with the right to a say in those organisations. A Scottish Parliament should, in appropriate situations, have the right to take land and enterprises into public control. These rights could be used to

safeguard jobs and industries or where the best interests of those dependent on the land or the enterprise are in jeopardy.

A Scottish Government should be able to create publicly owned enterprises to rebuild Scotland's industrial base on green technology, renewable and high value manufacturing; addressing unemployment black-spots and creating a more prosperous future for the people, especially the young people, of Scotland.

Since the establishment of the

Scottish Parliament and greater powers going to the Welsh Assembly there must inevitably be change at Westminster. The Tories are dodging the West Lothian Question, but it will not go away. Carwyn Jones, leader of the Welsh Assembly, has called for a Constitutional Convention for the UK. He states, "... for me, devolution is not about how each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are separately governed. Rather it is about how the UK is governed, not by one but by four administrations, and which are not in a hierarchical relationship one to another". He also states "representatives of all the states should come together and agree amongst themselves what limited range of powers should be conferred "upwards" on the federal authority. ■

■ Pauline Bryan is Editor of *The Citizen*

Now that we have the Scottish Parliament, Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies we have the basis for a federal arrangement with power devolved within the UK, but with the strength of a single Parliament dealing with macro economic issues and international relations.