

Scottish **Left** Review

Issue 81 March/April 2014 £2.00



European Elections 2014

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Comment

You would barely think there is an EU election barely two months away for all the profile it has. But ignoring Europe is a mistake.

It's a fascinating issue of Scottish Left Review, if only for the complexity and diversity in our Views of Europe feature.

We asked four writers to answer six questions each. All of the writers come from a left, socially-progressive position. All of them want to see an effective social Scotland. And yet when asked if the EU is a barrier to that, one answers Yes, one answers No, and one answer Yes/No.

Under usual circumstances this would not be the question you'd be asking. We don't frame a British General Election in the terms 'can British Democracy ever deliver social benefits

for working people?' and we don't frame elections to the Scottish Parliament in terms of 'can this Parliament make any real difference?'. But suddenly the EU has a very specific feel of being optional.

In Scotland we've been forced to think about life outside the EU as a result of political interventions in the independence debate on the part of right-wing Eurocrats like Barosso and right-wing European politician like Rajoy threatening us with eviction.

Meanwhile at the UK level we are now staring in the face an in/out referendum on the UK's continued

membership of the EU. In the self-reflecting world of the UK media it is widely predicted that UKIP may 'win' the Euro election primarily on the basis that they have received saturation coverage from the media telling us it is likely to win the Euro elections. If UKIP was ever to take power in the UK it would be perhaps the first case not of a state controlled media but of a media controlled state as wild-eyed radical right-wing editors pushed for ever-more right-wing politics.

So that's easy then, the right hates Europe so the left must love it? Except

the one attempt to set up a left party in the UK in recent years was the RMT-funded No2EU.

The confusion is straightforward in origin; the EU is a pretty effective tool for protecting various of the social gains of the post-war era and for pushing agendas such as equalities and human rights. It has acted to prevent the continent-wide Dutch Auction which has afflicted the US in which states and nations are set one against the other in an attempt to undermine protections for workers and the welfare state. It is fair to say that the EU has both protected and extended the gains of post-war social democracy.

But if all-for-one-and-one-for-all can be used to protect us from global corporations picking us off one by one, it can also be used by global corporations to pick us off all in one go. From the 1980s until a few years ago there was a powerful global movement which aimed to bypass democracy altogether in the pursuit of the destruction of the post-1945 social democratic consensus. Its primary agents were the IMF and the WTO which sought to create global trade rules that worked against citizens and in favour of corporations. And it sought to do it

without debate - national leaders were left with the option of going along with any new set of proposals quietly or face the wrath of the global markets on their own.

That was until a group of Latin American nations gathered together under the banner of MERCOSUR and decided collectively to block yet another round of trade liberalisation. Twice it blocked attempts to introduce laws that basically put the interests of corporations well ahead of those of any democratically elected government. But both the WTO's Doha and Copenhagen summits ended in deadlock. It became clear that the 'bully the globe in one go' model had reached the end of the line.

Which is where the EU comes in. Trade deals are now negotiated not multilaterally at a global scale but bilaterally between nations or groups of nations. Since it seems unlikely that there is a member state of the EU that would easily pass legislation in its own jurisdiction that granted supremacy to corporations over their own government, the EU was seen as suitably distant and undemocratic to be the vehicle instead. And thus we have the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, a move to

make it illegal for nation states to do almost anything that a secret court of business figures think interferes with the commercial interests of a corporation.

So the EU can easily become ally or enemy to progressives depending on the issue. It seems hard to come to a final conclusion - although if the TTIP is passed as it stands it certainly clarifies the risks.

Which all means that Scotland/UK membership of the EU becomes a complicated question for a progressive (though virtually none wants to be left outside the EU in a rightward-drifting UK).

However, this is for a not-to-distant future. The key in May is that the EU we have is populated by as many progressive voices as possible. Yes, this issue has given the Scottish Greens a platform to make a case for why we should consider giving our vote to them. Many of you may choose to stick with Labour or the SNP. But we must all think carefully about the outcome. It cannot be in anyone's interests on the Scottish left for the end result to be Nigel Farage gaining a foothold in Scotland. ■

The logo for the University and College Union (UCU) in Scotland. It features the letters 'UCU' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'U' and 'C' are grey, while the second 'U' is black.

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Ending Europe's economic war

Alexis Tsipras is the candidate of the European Left Party for the post of President of the European Commission, which will be elected by the European Parliament following the Elections in May. He outlines his platform.

Europe is at a critical crossroads. And there are two ways to go. The alternatives are clear.

Either we stand still. Or we move forward. Either we consent to the neoliberal status quo and pretend that the crisis can be resolved with the policies that have recycled it. Or we march into the future with the European Left.

Because the peoples of Europe are in danger, democracy itself is in danger.

Neoliberalism is a threat to the peoples of Europe. The extreme right is a danger to democracy. And the only alternative is the resistance of the peoples and the strengthening of the European Left

There can be no monetary union divided by a wall of money. A monetary union, indifferent to society and responsive only to the needs of finance capital, is a Eurozone prone to uncertainty, instability and crisis – a Eurozone with a short deadline. No monetary union can function without a central bank, acting as such. That is, acting as lender of last resort for member-states and not only for member-banks.

Europe needs its own Glass-Steagall Act, to separate commercial and investment banking activities and prevent such a dangerous merger of risks into one uncontrolled entity. Europe needs effective European legislation to tax offshore economic and entrepreneurial activities.

The European political establishment saw the debt crisis as an opportunity to rewrite Europe's postwar political economy. It is for that reason that they reject our proposal for a European Debt Conference, modelled on the London Debt Conference in 1953, to give a definite and viable collective

solution to the problem. It is for that reason that the European political establishment – a voluntary hostage to Ms Merkel – insists to impose on the entire Eurozone South policies that have deteriorated the initial problem.

We have to stop austerity. Current policies create pain, disappointment, unemployment and disaster in Europe. We have to create hope. Europe needs a 'New Deal' to fight unemployment and to finance its future. If Europe is to survive it needs redistribution and solidarity.

Those are the foundations of the totally new Europe that we are fighting for; in the place of a Europe that redistributes income to the rich and fear to the poor.

A monetary union which divides its member-states, divides the societies of its member-states, increases unemployment, poverty and social polarization would either be reconstructed or collapse.

With the active solidarity of a broad European anti-austerity movement, we shall win that fight.

Because, for the European Left to grow and influence in a decisive way the everyday lives of ordinary people, it needs the broadest possible social and political alliances.

The European election is a good chance to change the balance in Europe. If we succeed, we will no longer be a marginal political force. We will be in the field fighting to aid the peoples of Europe in favour of citizens, of employees and young people for future of Europe.

We have to cooperate and bring message of hope and change in every European country. Firstly create resistance. Give hope to disappointed

people that we could win and change the conservative policies and political parties that divide Europe. We want to unite Europe.

My candidacy for President of the European Commission is on behalf of each and all of you – on behalf of the European Left – for the Presidency of the European Commission. It is more than a candidacy, it is mandate for hope and change in Europe.

It is an honour for Syriza and the Greek people who are in the front line. It is a roll call for democracy, in which every generation deserves to participate, which every generation is entitled to live. However, let me assure you, my candidacy is not just a candidacy of the south of Europe but of all of Europe.

The European election next May provides a historic opportunity for the peoples of Europe to make change possible. To reject those who are recycling a world crisis in Europe. And, against common logic, insist that a recipe that has failed is a recipe to be continued.

The whole of Europe is under economic war. The victims are poor people and unemployed people. But it is not a war between nations of peoples. Is a war between the labour forces, the interests of citizens, of employees and of peoples against the interests of the financial markets, of neoliberal capitalism and of international finance.

I am very optimistic that in these elections the EL will be the surprise and that finally we will be able to change the balance. We will win with more forces united. And I believe we will finally manage to create a very clear alternative proposal for Europe.

And, allow me to repeat; the European Left is the alternative to neoliberalism. When the wheel of History turns back, it is the Left's moment to move Europe forward. We represent the forces of labour and we will win this fight. ■

Alexis Tsipras is the President of Syriza, Greece's radical left party

Views of Europe

Michael Keating is Professor of Politics at the University of Aberdeen and Director of the ESRC Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change, www.futureukandscotland.ac.uk/sccc

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Bill Paterson is Lecturer in International Relations at University of Stirling

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IS THE EU MORE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC OR MORE NEOLIBERAL?

MK: Social democracy is impossible without the EU. Individual countries are susceptible to movements of footloose capital, speculative pressures and the vagaries of the credit rating agencies. Without an overall framework governing competition, European states would be under massive pressure to subsidise business, cut taxes and engage in a race to bottom in social provision. In European jargon, this is called social dumping. Europe may not be itself a welfare state but it has allowed the European social model (in all its variations) to survive in spite of international and domestic pressures to dismantle it. At European level, a coordinated, Keynesian response to the crisis was possible, sustaining demand and mobilising investment for growth. Europe has tamed the aggressive nationalism of the large states, it has provided a beacon to countries emerging from Communist and Fascist dictatorships and it has (through the Council of Europe as well as the EU) entrenched basic human rights. It is no surprise that social democrats have been among the strongest supporters of European integration.

Current developments in Europe, however, give social democrats cause for despair. Monetarist doctrines have not only been adopted but actually written into the treaties which form the constitution of the EU. Following the fashion of the 1990s, the European Central Bank has operational independence, subject to a narrow

remit, focused on inflation rather than employment and growth. The European Commission has made itself the guardian of monetary orthodoxy, without a word of dissent from the Social Democratic commissioners. Member states have used Europe to impose austerity on their populations, so escaping blame. European competition policy, an essential tool to combat private monopolies and cartels, has been extended deeply into public services, promoting their marketisation. It has undermined national labour regulations. Matters are exacerbated by the lack of any countervailing duties to take into account social considerations and the way that the Court of Justice has interpreted competition law. The tragic result is that Europe is blamed for recession and austerity, obscuring the benefits it has brought and could still bring. The beneficiaries are populist movements mostly on the extreme right, taking their grievances out on minorities, migrants and the European idea itself.

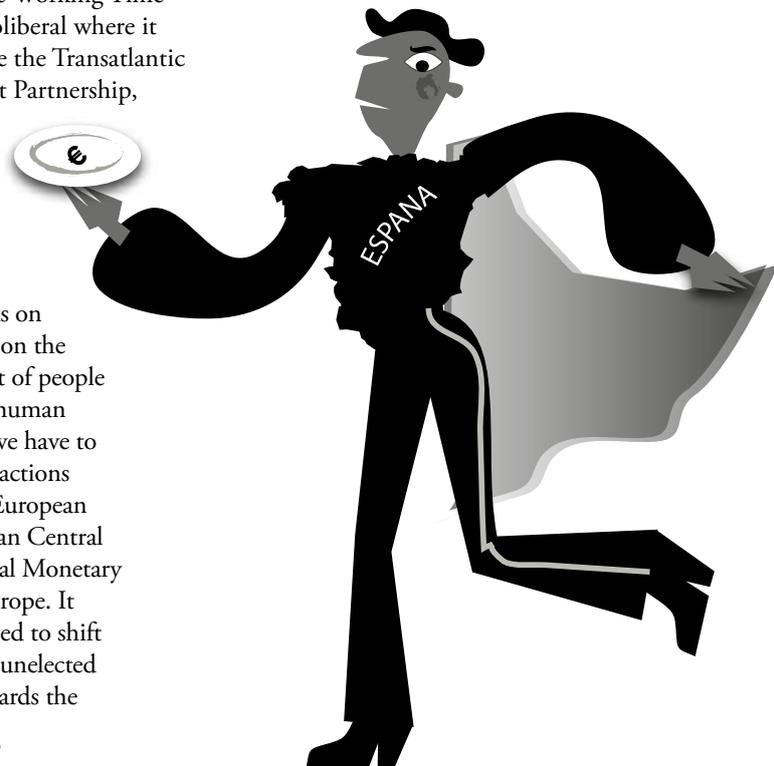
MC: That's a complex question. The EU is more corporatist than anything else. The assumption is that big government, big corporations and big trade unions can negotiate a settlement. That corporatist approach has little remaining support in British politics, so the EU is seen as too social democratic by the right where it enforces popular social chapter rights like the Working Time Directive. It's too neoliberal where it negotiates treaties like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which will prevent renationalisation of privatised services.

We need a workers' Europe, not a bosses Europe, and that means more focus on the rights of workers, on the freedom of movement of people and on the spread of human rights. It means that we have to end austerity and the actions of the Troika (of the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund) in southern Europe. It also means that we need to shift power away from the unelected Commission and towards the

European Parliament. A social Europe would enjoy support for a clear stance on popular politics that increase the quality of life of individuals and communities.

The need to take action on global human rights and climate change are areas where the EU could act decisively to change the world for the better. But only if there is genuine democracy at the heart of Europe.

IB/BP: The EU is clearly more neoliberal than social democratic. This is more obviously the case now than at any time in the past, especially given the austerity measures that are being imposed on peripheral Eurozone states. Moreover, the recent upsurge in rhetoric about the EU's so-called 'Social Dimension' and the need to ensure jobs as well as growth, masks the growing reality of widening inequality, increased disciplining of workers and unions, and the erosion of public services. The EU does promote regulatory standards which are more 'social' than is the case, for example, in the US or the UK, but at the same time we should not mistake this for a social democratic set of institutions. It is an error to equate neoliberalism with free-market economics, for in practice neoliberalism has often been established via formally 'non-market' institutions rather than in opposition to them. One clear example is the preference at all levels within the EU for 'flexicurity' and



We asked four experts to consider six different questions about the European Union which should shape how Scotland votes in May. Here are the answers they gave.

'activation' as the cure for all labour market ills, such as high unemployment. As has been documented in numerous studies, flexicurity and activation are bywords for labour market casualisation, the hollowing out of corporatist structures at the firm and policy-making levels, and the justification for greater inequality on the grounds that any job is better than no job at all. Therefore, if we view neoliberalism as the increased disciplining of workers and households via market and non-market means, then the EU is clearly more neoliberal than social democratic, and this is becoming more apparent over time.

CAN THE EU EVER BE DEMOCRATISED?

MK: It is often said that Europe cannot be a democracy because there is no demos. According to this argument, only the unitary nation-state can provide democracy. I do not agree. Plurinational and complex states can be democratised, as the experience of Scotland has shown.

In any case, falling back on the nation-state is futile, given the impotence of nation states in the contemporary world. There have been some positive experiences in Europe including, surprising though it may sound, the European Parliament, which has greatly extended its power and is less beholden to the executive than most national parliaments, including Westminster and Holyrood. There is a commitment this year that in appointing the new European Commission, the results of the European election will be taken into account – a vague promise but at least it is a start. The present Commission is a sad contrast with the time of Jacques Delors, when it was a hive of ideas and progressive thinking.

The other channel for democratising Europe is by linking it more closely to politics at other levels. This is not the demand by Tory Eurosceptics that national parliaments should be able to block European laws, which would undermine the whole project. Rather it

means that Europe will be incorporated into national and local politics, and vice versa. More flexibility could also be given in the application of European directives at national and local levels. The Committee of the Regions was a good idea very badly applied, but there is scope for a stronger multilevel dimension to the European project.

Democratisation is inescapably tied up with the need for a stronger social dimension for Europe. It really makes no sense to talk of democratisation and then insist that Europe be bound into a monetarist straitjacket. Europe is, and must be, a political space in which there are political choices. Here again the social democrats should be in the lead. Prospects of a pan-European social democracy looked promising in the 1990s, when social democrats were simultaneously in so many states. They were fatally undermined by the Blair government's turning it back on European social democracy in favour of its preferred 'third way', which included

CWU Scotland welcomes all delegates and visitors to STUC 2014 in Dundee and hopes everyone attending has an enjoyable and successful conference



have a heritage that at least partly points to values such as social justice, cooperation, and solidarity, to be

Bill Clinton and excluded Lionel Jospin, and Blair's odd choice of political friends (Berlusconi, Aznar, Sarkozy) – and that was even before the Iraq war.

MC: The EU must be democratised. And we must build a campaign of trade unionists, social movements and communities for a Europe of the people. The demand that the EU reflect the needs of people and communities, not the needs of big corporations and distant governments, can have a popular resonance. The imposition of austerity on Greece and other EU states as part of the Eurozone stability plan has brought the EU into disrepute. We must prevent any future imposition of austerity, and instead build collective responsibility for our shared economy.

The current model is fatally distant from communities and democratic structures. The concentration of power in the EU with the unelected Commission means that there is little transparency, a disengaged public and a total lack of democracy. We need to use the demand for EU Reform to place democracy at the heart of the EU. While the movement for change in the EU is far from ideologically united, we must make a case for democratisation that is irrefutable. And that will mean moving away from a corporatist model and towards one that recognises the role of popular movements and communities in creating politics.

IB/BP: There is always the possibility, with institutions such as the EU, which

reclaimed for more progressive and radical ends. Therefore, it would be foolish to rule out the prospect of the EU being democratised in the future. However, it depends to some extent on your definition of democracy; in a procedural, formal sense, the EU is more democratic than ever before, with the European Parliament possessing more powers than was the case a generation ago. In other words, we need to be careful when answering this question, for a procedural definition of democracy still leaves us well short of where we should be. There are two ways of thinking about this. Most obviously, the last several years of crisis and conflict have made it clearer than ever that the EU has some way to go before it can be viewed as representative of the ideals and aspirations of the European peoples. But more importantly, and also less visibly, the ways in which policies and institutional reforms are produced at the EU level indicate a highly undemocratic way of operating. More specifically, and as detailed in David Cronin's recent book on corporate Europe (*Corporate Europe: How Big Business Sets Policies on Food, Climate and War*, Pluto Press), there is a systematic and enduring bias towards transnational corporations. Examples include the privileged access to policy-makers given to lobbyists acting on behalf of these companies, plus the committees which they 'advise'. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that, as long as the EU exists, its origins in the above-mentioned values will always make it possible for organised and long-term activism to make a difference.

WHAT CURRENT ISSUES ON THE EU AGENDA ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO SCOTLAND?

MK: Recovery from the crisis and the need for a proper European response. Recognition of the social dimension. Research and development policy. Energy.

MC: The ongoing use of EU Directives to promote the corporatisation of our economy is the major issue we need to tackle. A case in point was the use by George Lyon, the current Liberal Democrat MEP for Scotland, of European directives to push for privatisation of Caledonian MacBrayne ferries. His actions as a Scottish Minister are replicated by Councils across the country. I will argue against directives promoting the privatisation and tendering out of services. This will remove one of the most persuasive arguments for privatisation and tendering out.

The EU is currently negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership which will undermine our economy and our democracy if enacted. It will allow corporations to sue governments who want to regulate markets to prevent speculation, labour rights abuses or environmental destruction. We must fight this to retain our democracy, and control over our economy. The austerity agenda must be resisted at the EU level. The actions of the Troika have destroyed lives and communities and have resulted in a massive transfer of wealth to Germany. This is unacceptable, and must be resisted. Countries must be allowed to adapt to economic circumstances and therefore controls on deficit are inappropriate. We must also make the case for the freedom of movement of people, which is under attack from racists and opportunistic politicians. At the same time we must find ways to curtail the movement of capital to offshore tax havens.

IB/BP: Perhaps the most important issue on the agenda for all EU members, and those seeking accession, is the completion of the EU and US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). I argue this on this basis that the conclusions of the TTIP will fundamentally transform the ability of member governments' to exercise policy autonomy. Before setting out this argument it is important to note the following. In 2011 Scottish international exports (excluding oil and gas) were estimated at £23.9 billion. The USA was Scotland's main international export destination (£3.5 billion), but collectively the EU (primarily Netherlands (£2.7 billion), France (£1.9 billion), Germany (£1.4 billion) and Belgium (£1.0 billion))

accounted for £11.0 billion of Scottish exports (Scottish Government 2013). Given that nearly half of Scotland's international exports are destined for the single market membership of the EU seem important. However, it is important to consider what future EU membership might demand under the TTIP. In essence the TTIP negotiations are to establish the largest ever free trade area (FTA) that seeks the elimination of tariffs and the harmonisation of regulatory standards. To date these negotiations have been devoid of public transparency and participation, but there have been leaked documents. Whilst some argue that the TTIP will simply be a case of harmonising regulations that will enhance consumer choice, but will be largely inconsequential to wider society, more detailed studies of the template used by the US for previous FTAs paints a different picture of a litigation process securing corporate interests. It is widely known that the TTIP will establish the National Sovereignty and Investor State Dispute Settlements (ISDS), which will give private corporations the legal powers to force governments to maintain trade and investment liberalisation – or face legal battles and financial penalties. This means that if a corporation has investment or trade in Scotland and this is covered by the TTIP, a Scottish Government pursuing economic, environmental, and social policies that undermined the ability of that corporation to maintain its rate of profit would face legal action and liability to compensate the corporation for losses. Due to this it is argued that TTIP will impact on regulations concerning agriculture, consumer choice, environmental protection, finance, health, labour and human rights, public services and intellectual property. As a member of the EU, the UK Government is both party to negotiations and has been a staunch supporter of the liberalisation inherent in the TTIP.

On the one hand, both transatlantic political and corporate elites are championing the TTIP on the grounds that it will cut the cost of business transactions and boost employment. On the other hand, it has been argued that the TTIP may undermine European integration because as the single market is opened to US corporate competition intra-European trade will decline. A recent report by the European Greens argues that the TTIP is shrouded in secrecy; the

ISDS is undemocratic; they are deeply sceptical about the growth promised, and fear that liberalisation will cause ecological standards to decline (the ban of fracking in the EU could be contested as protectionism); and that labour rights may be deemed protectionism. A recent study has argued that the TTIP will require the UK's NHS to engage and lock-in a further drive for privatisation and that health care will be driven by EU and US corporations compete to offer the lowest price for contracts. It further argues that the purpose of the TTIP is for all government procurement (other than security) in the EU and US to be subject to such corporation competition. Given the above, the TTIP is an important issue on the EU agenda for either an independent Scotland in the EU or a Scotland in the union with the UK because it will impact on the policy autonomy of all EU member states.

WHAT THINGS DOES THE EU DO WELL, AND WHAT DOES IT DO BADLY?

MK: The free movement of labour in Europe is a huge achievement. The Schengen area of free travel is a boon to citizens – I just wish the UK would join. The EU has been very important in the expansion and consolidation of democracy. The most infuriating aspect of Europe can be the bureaucracy. There is often an obsession with procedure and regulations at the expense of thinking about policy.

MC: The EU has done valuable work in promoting rights at work and spreading human rights. This is balanced by the imposition of austerity on Greece and other southern European countries. While many value the lack of war between the major European powers, at heart the EU's failure to embrace democracy means it will always fail to work properly for the people.

The abolition of the death penalty and the promotion of human rights has been one of the EU's finest

achievements. European pressure has been instrumental in promoting LGBT+ rights and women's rights globally. But these gains must be seen in the light of the disastrous austerity that has produced conflict and severely shortened lives. The undemocratic nature of the EU has led to corporate dominance, particularly in the post-Thatcher era. The priority given to big corporations and their sectional interests undermines the democracy of individual states and the rights of workers. It privileges capital over labour. The EU must move to a democratic model that places people, their communities and their rights as citizens and at work at the heart of Europe.

IB/BP: One thing the EU has done consistently well since its inception is prevent a continent-wide war. We need to remind ourselves, especially with this year being the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I, that continent-wide war, or at least war involving some or all of the major European countries, was the norm for centuries. Therefore, if nothing else the EU has brought that vicious cycle to a close – and this should justifiably be seen as an impressive achievement. In addition, although the EU did far too little with regard to many of the conflicts which consumed the former Yugoslavia, it is easy to forget that in the early 1990s many predicted that these would spill over to numerous countries in the former Soviet Bloc (the most obvious example being countries potentially threatened by a revived Hungarian irredentism). The carrot/stick of potential/future



EU membership proved to be crucial in steering several countries away from more violent routes. At the same time, the EU has not done well when it comes to living up to values such as social justice, cooperation, and solidarity. This often leaves one in a quandary when it comes to critiquing the EU. That is, how does one seek to build a more socially just Europe when the core aim of European integration – to prevent another Europe-wide war – has been achieved so successfully? Key to any successful Left critique of the EU is the need to show how the traditional neoliberal view of Left politics, national protectionism in the name of inertia, can be challenged through a Left politics which is visibly internationalist and diverse in nature. Unfortunately, the Left is not always so good at rising to this necessary challenge. Nevertheless, the recent explosion of protest and creation of cross-national solidarities give us hope.

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS ON A COMMON WEAL AGENDA FROM EU MEMBERSHIP?

MK: There are not many. The Nordic states have shown how EU membership is compatible with a social investment and social democratic state. Welfare cutbacks have been the work of national governments, not the EU. European rules do impose limits on debts and deficits but then social democratic governments have never been particularly fiscally profligate. They do have high spending levels but these are covered by taxes. Europe has abandoned Keynesianism but then small states cannot practice that anyway; it must be done at the European level. The dogmatic application of competition policy and its extension into public services is problematic and could be the most serious constraint.

MC: The corporate control of the EU is the biggest threat to a more cooperative, more equal Europe. This corporate control is articulated through austerity in southern Europe. It also finds expression in the tendency to promote privatisation and tendering out of public services. But we can build a movement that forces an economy for all onto the table for Scotland, and creates a model for the rest of Europe. This model would reject austerity and the low tax, low regulation, high inequality of the neoliberal economy.

We must fight for economic democracy. We should build systems

that can't be attacked. We can learn from Latin America where initiatives like Participatory Budgeting and democratic ownership of utilities are a way to prevent right-wing extremists in government selling off public services.

We need to create housing coops and municipal energy companies. We should wholly elect the boards of public organisations like universities. These changes will build an economy that works for the many, not the elite. That's what Common Weal is about, and that is what we must work for.



IB/BP: The SNP Government has discussed embracing the social and economic policies of the 'Common Weal' after independence. The 'Common Weal' emerged from Scottish scholars, trade unionists and activists deliberating on an alternative economic agenda to the neo-liberal model favoured by Westminster (privatization and market-discipline). The Jimmy Reid Foundation has been among the main bodies seeking to articulate the 'Common Weal' and defines it as '(it is) done in the interests and for the benefit of the majority or the general public'. Inspired by the Nordic (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway) economic models, the 'Common Weal' aims to address low income and wealth

inequalities, promote low poverty levels, develop a more skilled labour force, engender greater democratic participation and an re-establish a tripartite relationship between the state, employers' associations and trade unions. Central to achieving these aims is a commitment to using government tax-raising and spending (fiscal policy) to invest and protect both existing and new sectors of the economy to initiate growth. Indeed the 'Common Weal' echoes many aspects of Keynesian economic policy. In contrast the EU is committed to the deconstruction of Keynesian social and economic policies through not only limiting EU membership to market economies, but with the aim of outlawing government assistance/subsidies to domestic workforce/sectors/companies. Since the 1980s the EC has been assertive in seeking to clarify, legalize and enforce the conditions under which EU members can use state-aid for the above purposes. For example, the legal framework found in the Article 107 (1) of the Lisbon Treaty places significant restrictions on the use of state subsidies by member states, 'which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the common market.' Thus members are also obliged under the treaty to illustrate to the EC that state-aid is not distorting the single market. Exceptions are possible, but only within a very limited criterion of defined policy objectives – see Article 107 (2). At present members use the ambiguity of the language on state-aid in the treaty to frame subsidies to national champions in terms of restructuring or streamlining corporations/sectors to enable their competitiveness in the global economy. This has caused conflicts between the EC and member governments. The EC's assertiveness to address the ambiguity continues, as the declared objectives of the EC for the coming year are to "focus on modernising areas such as state aid rules, industrial policy and completing the single market". Furthermore, the EC European Competitiveness Report (2012) asserted that "the modernisation of the industrial base and the removal of institutional impediments to entrepreneurship can be seen as crucial for the European enterprises". This modernisation not only involves addressing subsidies, but also a commitment to establishing a flexible

Working to tackle the scourge of Child Poverty

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The Educational
Institute of Scotland

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Poverty can have a devastating impact on the educational achievements of children and young people.

As Scotland's largest teaching union, the EIS has a long-standing commitment to support measures aimed at tackling child poverty and providing all young people with the opportunity to reach their potential.

The EIS has launched a new campaign to tackle child poverty and inequality, specifically in relation to the impact on learning and teaching in Scottish education establishments and on young people's health and well-being.

Following the early gain of helping to secure free school meals in primary 1 to 3 as a means of tackling child poverty, the EIS will continue to work in partnership with other organisations to campaign for a fairer society for all young people.



www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Child_poverty.htm

THE CWU WELCOMES DELEGATES AND VISITORS TO THE 2014 ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE STUC

Billy Hayes General Secretary
www.billyhayes.co.uk

Jane Loftus President

www.cwu.org  

labour market [i.e. short term contracts for labour]. The EC has also promoted the benchmarking and monitoring of member states economic policies to identify government subsidies and protection so that they can be addressed. The supremacy of EU law, including state subsidies and domestic labour law, are important parts of the process for successful accession to the EU. An independent Scotland developing a fiscal policy that sought protection and subsidies for the domestic workforce/sectors/companies as found in the 'Common Weal' would have to justify to the EC that these subsidies met the criterion laid out in Article 107 (2) of the TFEU.

EUROPE AND THE INDEPENDENCE DEBATE: WOULD SCOTLAND GET INTO EU AND HOW, AND WILL THE UK STAY IN EUROPE AND IN WHAT FORM?

MK: I have written extensively about this but, every time the argument seems to be won, somebody comes back and opens it up again. Scotland would need to apply for membership but it would be admitted. Under the

Edinburgh Agreement, Scotland would be recognised by the United Kingdom. There is no reason for any of the other EU members to refuse recognition. There is no precedent for a seceding state, recognised by the host state, not being recognised by others. EU membership is open to any recognised European democracy that meets the Copenhagen criteria and adopts the *acquis communautaire*. Scotland has been within the EU/EC for over forty years and does meet these criteria. The situation is not like Catalonia, where the Spanish government has ruled out an independence referendum and the constitution forbids secession.

It is in nobody's interest to throw Scotland out of the single market – not Scotland, the rest of the UK, the other member states, business or anyone would gain from this. There is no 'queue' to get into the EU. Applicants are admitted as and when they are ready. Turkey first tried to get in 50 years ago, so if there were a queue they would be at the head; but 22 other states have got in before them. As the UK Government noted in one of its papers, the Nordic states completed negotiations in 1-2 years. Were Iceland or Norway to change their

minds and apply now, they would be in very quickly. There are many questions about Scotland's position and strategy within the EU, which the Yes side need to clarify. These include the implications of keeping the Pound, a matter on which the Yes side has recently been put on the back foot. Suggesting that Scots would be thrown out of the European Union simply for exercising their democratic rights, however, is to undermine the very basis of the European order. This is essentially a political issue. The legal details are entirely secondary, as a way can always be found.

MC: There is almost no question that Scotland would be admitted to the EU. The only way in which Scotland would not be admitted is because of a veto by an existing member state. But no member state is going to want its nationals living abroad removed from Scotland. No state is going to want to lose access to shared resources. No state is going to wish to see its students charged university fees at Scottish Universities. The Spanish are not going to give up access to Scottish fishing. Scotland has all of the required legal and cultural status to enter the EU, so there would be little

reason to refuse entry. This is why no EU member government has yet stated that they will veto Scottish membership. Scotland will remain an EU member if it so wishes.

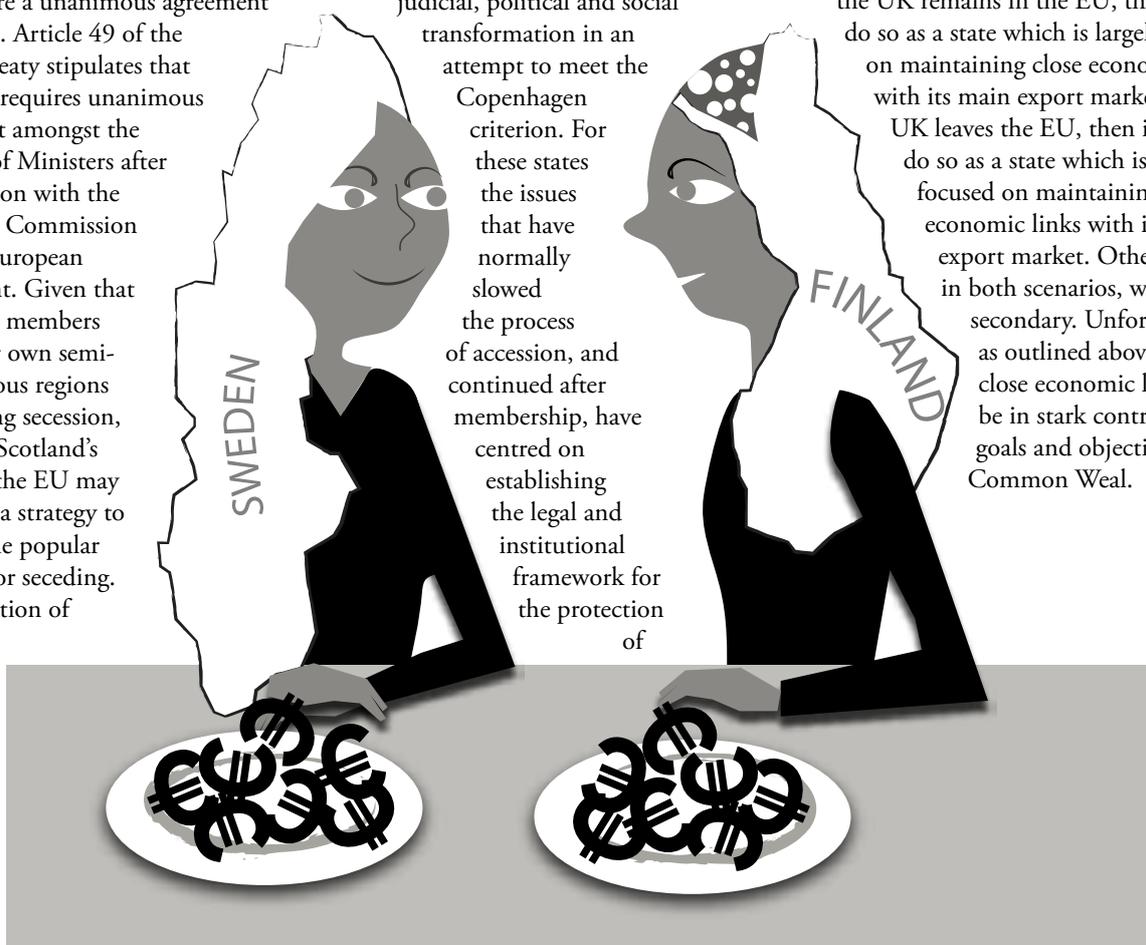
On the other hand, UK membership of the EU looks increasingly shaky. The media-fuelled rise of the UK Independence Party and the need for David Cameron to keep his right wing fringe on board has led to the promise of an 'in-out referendum' if the Conservatives win the next election. It seems increasingly likely that Labour will also promise such a referendum. Because none of the UK parties are able to make a case for EU membership, and there is little prospect of the sort of pro-corporate reform they want, it seems likely that the British electorate will overwhelmingly vote to leave the EU.

IB/BP: The question of whether an independent Scotland would have continued membership of the EU through being a former territory of the UK or whether it would have to begin its own accession process is mired with uncertainty. The reason for this is that this is the first time the EU has been confronted with the division of an existing member into two separate states. On the one hand, the EU could accept the status of an independent Scotland's as continued membership due to being a former country of the UK, but this could still require a unanimous agreement at the EU. Article 49 of the Lisbon Treaty stipulates that accession requires unanimous agreement amongst the Council of Ministers after consultation with the European Commission and the European Parliament. Given that many EU members have their own semi-autonomous regions demanding secession, blocking Scotland's access to the EU may appear as a strategy to undermine popular support for seceding. Confirmation of whether political elites will act in this way has not

been given, but we do know that popular demands for independence are not predicated solely on membership of the EU. There is certainty on the criterion for accession as it is written down in EU treaties and known as the Copenhagen criteria. This includes 35 different policy fields (Chapters of the *acquis*), such as a commitment to accepting the Schengen Agreement and privatisation of the postal service (Chapter 3); to prevent state subsidies (Chapter 8); ensuring privatisation and competition in the supply of energy (Chapter 15), and to adopt the Euro (Chapter 17). Since the Amsterdam Treaty (1999) all new EU member states automatically accept the Schengen Agreement (abolition of border checks on EU citizens) because it has been integrated into the EU law for accession. Ireland and the United Kingdom are the only EU members to have secured opt-outs from the principles of Schengen Agreement. Similarly the UK has negotiated an opted-out from adopting the Euro.

A key question is what would it mean if an independent Scotland's preferred fast track route was block by the Council of Ministers and it had to apply for membership in the 'usual way'? A point to consider here is the accession experience of the former communist states during consecutive waves of EU enlargement. These states have undertaken an economic, judicial, political and social transformation in an attempt to meet the Copenhagen criterion. For these states the issues that have normally slowed the process of accession, and continued after membership, have centred on establishing the legal and institutional framework for the protection of

human rights; property rights; the democratic process; privatisation of state-owned assets; and the creation of a flexible workforce. With regards to the 'exceptional' membership of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, it has been demonstrated that both the EC and the European Council were prepared to offer a greater degree of flexibility over these states meeting the Copenhagen criterion. For example a year after being granted membership, the continuation of fraud within Bulgaria saw tens of millions of EU funds frozen by the EC. Given that the UK's current membership illustrates that the whole of the UK meets the Copenhagen criteria, Scotland must already meet the accession criteria after 40 years of membership as part of the UK. If an independent Scotland was to apply for EU membership in the 'usual way' and a European Council prevented Scotland's membership, it would give the impression that Scotland was being discriminated against. Membership could be legitimately blocked if the European Council refused to allow the UK's opt-out from Schengen to be transferred to Scotland, and Scotland refused to accept the principles of the Schengen Agreement integrated in the EU law. A similar point could be made about the acceptance of the Euro. Again this is all speculation because none of the above has been confirmed by the EU. Briefly on the UK membership of the EU: If the UK remains in the EU, then it will do so as a state which is largely focused on maintaining close economic links with its main export market. If the UK leaves the EU, then it will do so as a state which is largely focused on maintaining close economic links with its main export market. Other issues, in both scenarios, will be secondary. Unfortunately, as outlined above, those close economic links will be in stark contrast to the goals and objectives of the Common Weal. ■



It's Greens versus UKIP

It's pretty great being Nigel Farage. He's already vastly wealthy from his career as an international banker, speculating on commodities that the lower orders dug out of the ground. And now he's an MEP, giving him the opportunity to pocket three million quid or so in expenses while not actually showing up all that much. The media love him, he's the toast of the lounge bar, and he never has to pay for a pint or a taxi.

But in his quiet moments, perhaps alone in a Brussels hotel at four in the morning, there is a vision that haunts him. A spectre, a Frankenstein's monster of all the worst things he can imagine. A feminist, socialist, vegan, African immigrant; a public-sector trade unionist; a – he holds his copy of *According To Clarkson* tight for comfort – a *Scot*.

Nigel doesn't know it yet, but this nightmare has a name. Her name is Maggie Chapman.

Maggie, a South African citizen brought up in Harare, Zimbabwe, a university lecturer and EIS organiser, an Edinburgh City councillor, an unabashed socialist and the Scottish Greens' co-convenor and European Parliament candidate, is the person with the opportunity to spoil Nigel's big day.

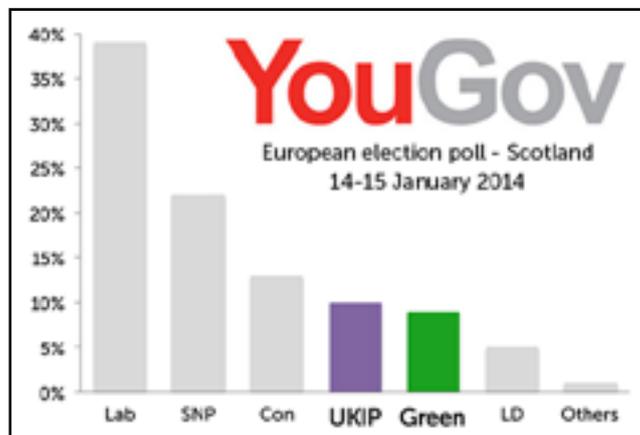
For UKIP, the European election on 22 May should be their finest hour. While the collapse of Liberal Democrat votes to Labour have dampened their hopes of winning the election outright, they will probably relegate the Conservatives to third place, exerting massive pressure on the government to pander to UKIP's palaeoconservative agenda.

In Scotland, though, they face a different symbolic challenge. UKIP has never won a single election in Scotland. No councilors, no MEP, certainly no MSP or MP. And it burns. You may think that UKIP don't care about winning here, but Scotland's refusal to join in the Farage lovefest is an existential threat to UKIP's everybody-loves-us image. When your success is based upon a media consensus that everybody secretly agrees with you, the taciturn disapproval of a whole nation that

apparently wouldn't piss on you if you were on fire is distinctly inconvenient.

So winning an MEP in Scotland is hugely important for UKIP. It's their chance to show they can operate beyond The Wall, that their appeal is as universal as the media currently suggest. It's their chance to silence the dissenting voice.

To see how significant Scottish resistance to the far-right party is, one need only look at the coverage of Farage on tour before and after his visit to Scotland in May last year. Prior to his trip north (to campaign in the Donside by-election in which UKIP spent



£19,000 and still lost their deposit) every Farage appearance featured smiling locals and a windowed pint of best British ale. No-one could have guessed from these photo opportunities that the UKIP leader wasn't some kind of national treasure, a cross between Stephen Fry and Delia Smith.

But after protestors organised by the Radical Independence Campaign 'welcomed' him to Scotland by kettling him inside Edinburgh's Canon's Gait pub (still a much more considerate place to be kettled than those the rest of us get at the hands of the boys in blue), suddenly there were voices of dissent everywhere. He even had to face protests in Kent of all places, his birthplace and his party's spiritual home. It was an Emperor's New Clothes moment.

And if a UKIP victory in unconquerable Scotland is important to Farage, it's even more important to the campaign against Scottish independence.

Crucial to their campaign is the argument that Scotland is politically no different to the rest of the UK, that

our apparent predilection for more progressive policies is nothing more than an illusion brought on by our lack of fiscal responsibilities, a symptom of our subsidy junkiehood.

However much the No campaign distance themselves from UKIP, they know that a Farage triumph splashed across the front pages, identifying the UK as UKIP country, while Scotland remains resolutely unmoved, would be a crushing blow to that theory. It would prove that we have a different political culture, that we are more progressive. And it would prove that the Coalition government is

not just a blip in history that will be swept away in a glorious One-Nation Labour landslide – rather the UK is a country that is marching rapidly to the right and far from what Scots consider a moderate politics.

A UKIP seat in Scotland, on the other hand, will help the No campaign make their case that Scotland's progressivism is all for show. That radical Scots should fear the hidden conservatism of their neighbours, which will creep out in the first election of an

independent Scottish parliament and strangle our hopes for change. It would tell us what the No campaign need, above all, to tell us: there is no hope.

A year after the Battle of the Canon's Gait, on 22 May this year, Scots have a chance to continue our inconvenient resistance to the xenophobic, ultra-nationalist politics of UKIP, and to proudly proclaim our belief in change for the better. But we also face the biggest threat to our resolve.

Scotland has not proved entirely immune to the bombardment of pro-UKIP messages in the British media, or to the plague-on-all-your-houses nihilism that suggests electing the unelectable might be the best way to express one's anger.

In YouGov's first poll on the European elections, UKIP scored 26 per cent, a result which would push the Tories into third place for the first time in their history and more than double the number of UKIP MEPs to 23.

In Scotland they took just 10 per

There is likely to be one seat up for grabs in the Euro elections in Scotland and Gary Dunion argues that it's between the Scottish Greens and UKIP. And the Scottish Greens are currently only one point behind in the polls.

cent, less than half their support in any other region. But enough to put them in the race for the sixth and final Scottish seat. With the Lib Dems collapsing – they polled at five per cent in Scotland – George Lyon's seat is up for grabs and UKIP's London branch chairman, David Coburn, has his sights set on it.

Who can beat him to that seat? The feminist, environmentalist socialist from Harare, Maggie Chapman, is polling just one per cent behind UKIP.

For the purely tactical voter, there are some fascinating but ultimately inconclusive maths to consider. We cannot know exactly where the votes will fall; to my mind it seems unlikely that Labour will romp to a 17-point lead over the SNP for example.

But we can know this: UKIP will be heavily supported by the media (Ofcom

just released guidelines ensuring that they'll be treated as a 'major party' for UK-wide broadcasts) and have deep pockets. They will be in play. The Greens have never failed to increase vote share from one European election to the next, and are usually underestimated by early polls. The Lib Dems are collapsing everywhere and are unlikely to retain their seat.

And, crucially, while both SNP and Labour will hope for a third seat, the tactical voter needs to remember that by the time we get to that count each SNP and Labour vote will have been reduced to a third of its value. If you're just voting to keep UKIP out, you'll need to cast three SNP or Labour votes to get the same stopping power as one Green vote.

But for me this isn't a purely tactical

question, this is about two visions of Scotland, diametrically opposed.

On the day the results are announced, we will be presented with a triumphant vision of Britain as seen from a Kentish lounge bar. A Britain of immigrants cowering as Home Office thugs kick in their doors, of welfare claimants destituted then arrested for cluttering the streets, of gays and lesbians turned away from segregated businesses, all presided over by the banker who became the most popular man in the land, and cheered along by forelock-tugging commoners, happy with their lot as long as they know they can always kick down.

Will that vision extend to Scotland? Or will we have grabbed the opportunity to say we will not submit to hopelessness; we will not be driven apart, we will not

accept that our best days are decades behind us?

If in the aftermath of that election Scotland has elected Maggie Chapman, a Green, and rejected UKIP, we will have forced our own vision onto the scene. A vision of a Scotland of a war on inequality instead of on the poor, where austerity is thrown off in favour of making the rich pay for their own mess, where our brothers and sisters from around the world are welcomed, and our nation is known around the world as a voice for peace, a friendly refusenik to the NATO nuclear alliance.

I know that struggle won't be won overnight. But it won't be won ever if we don't take the field. If Maggie Chapman wins on 22 May, radicals will wake up with our banner flying high over Scotland.

That's a good start. ■

Don't Call Me Hero



Readings of protest and consolation
from Scottish Literature of the First World War

Introduced by Dr David Goldie and Dr Andrew Noble

Friday March 21st 7-9pm
Augustine Church Centre
41 George IV Bridge
Edinburgh

The event is free but you need to register by emailing

dontcallmehero@reidfoundation.org

This event is organised by the Jimmy Reid Foundation's
Alternative World War One Commemoration Committee

**Gary Dunion is a Green
Party activist**

It isn't obvious

The theme of the STUC's 2014 Congress is 'A Just Scotland', the title under which we have been conducting our consultation and engagement initiative with unions and their members on Scotland's Constitutional future.

Inevitably, given this will be our last Annual Congress before the Referendum, it is the issue that is sure to dominate discussion. While it is always dangerous to prejudge the outcome of any Congress debate, anyone who expects either a Yes or No position to emerge should not hold their breath.

As I said when I launched our second A Just Scotland (AJS2) report in February, whilst many union members have made their choice, for a significant proportion, the answer 'isn't obvious' and they are in the process of balancing the advantages and disadvantages based on the recognition that changing Scotland's relationship with the UK involves a 'trade off' of powers and/or opportunity. Exaggerated claims from both campaigns, and the increasingly febrile tone of debate, are an impediment to these vital considerations.

While some may be disappointed, I make no apology for our approach which I expect Congress to fully endorse. It is an approach that takes a detailed look at the issues and asks hard questions of both campaigns, concentrating on which of the referendum outcomes is most likely to promote social justice and tackle economic inequality.

AJS2 identifies the pressing need for the pro-devolution parties to present vision for Scotland and give clear commitments to bringing forward enhanced devolution proposals and to be definitive that any block grant funding formula would not place Scotland in a worse position relative to rUK if we vote No.

It is also clear that, despite some very positive policy commitments, the Scottish Government and Yes campaign have thus far failed to convince many that the institutional and fiscal circumstances post-independence would allow meaningful economic and social progress to be achieved. Nor has it accepted the level of tax redistribution which will be necessary to realise the positive vision presented.

While the Congress is unlikely to

reach either a Yes or No position, what it will do is set out a progressive policy agenda to be advanced whatever the outcome in September.

At the heart of that agenda will be our economic alternative. I believe we have won the argument against austerity and the opinion polls seem to back that up. However, there is no room for complacency. One only has to look at the response to some fairly modest economic good news to see how things might play out over the coming year.

Let's get some of the facts straight on the economy. The recent data on growth and employment cannot mask the fact that austerity has failed, even in the terms set by its staunchest advocates.

In 2010 we were told by the UK Government that the economy would grow by 8.2 per cent by the end of 2013 - actual growth 2.7 per cent. In 2010 we were told that borrowing last year would be £60 billion - actual borrowing £111 billion. We were told that the deficit would be eliminated by 2015. Now we are told that won't happen to 2018. We were told that real wages would grow by 0.5 per cent in 2013. We are now told real wage growth will be 0.1 per cent.

There might be some positive signs on employment. But it is what is underneath the figures that matters. We have a labour market characterised by long term youth unemployment; persistent unemployment amongst women; declining real wages; increasing underemployment; and the vulnerability and insecurity of part time, temporary work, forced self employment and the increasing use of zero hours contracts.

The level of full-time employment across Scotland is still more than 50,000 fewer than it was in 2008. And our underemployment rate of 10.6 per cent is almost four per cent above the rate in 2008.

We have an economy characterised by underinvestment and growing

inequality. There has been no meaningful reform of the banks and there has been no rebalancing of our economy away from financial services towards manufacturing.

What little growth we have had in the UK recently has been fueled by an increase in house prices in the South East and an increase in consumer debt. We continue to have the sort of inequality

and instability that caused the crash in 2008, and which suggests that another crisis may be just around the corner.

We may have won the argument austerity; what we have yet to do is convince enough people that there is a genuine, credible alternative - through fair taxation and a living wage, through quality jobs and decent services, through fair benefits and stronger communities and through a comprehensive industrial strategy

including a statutory scheme of sectoral collective bargaining.

Perhaps the most fundamental problem we face in Britain today is inequality. The UK is one of the most unequal nations in the developed world. This has its roots in short term thinking, share price driven, profit obsessed, bonus grabbing, financial capitalism. It has been caused by a political and economic elite that willfully undermined the institutions that in any democracy should hold them to account - principally trade unions. The decline in real wages as a share of national income is a direct result of the political and industrial attacks on union organisation and influence.

And the power imbalance we see in our economy will not be reversed until the legitimate role of unions in the workplace and in wider society is recognised and an environment exists where unions can function effectively and responsibly in the interests of working people, their families, and wider society.

That is why, as our Congress has repeatedly emphasised, we need the removal of all anti-union legislation and a framework - underpinned by legislation

Congress is unlikely to reach either a Yes or No position but will set out a progressive policy agenda to be advanced whatever the outcome in September

This April's STUC Congress will inevitably be dominated by the approaching independence referendum. Grahame Smith makes clear that the STUC will not adopt sides but look for answers on the best future for Scotland.

if necessary - to put collective bargaining arrangements in place across the economy.

When a union, on behalf of a workforce, and an employer enter into a collective agreement it is a form of industrial democracy or, although in no sense equal, of workplace power sharing. With it comes a responsibility on both sides to negotiate to resolve differences and, on union members, a legal requirement to demonstrate through a secret ballot that there is support for any industrial action proposed if agreement cannot be reached.

However, as recent events have shown, when an employer despite voluntarily entering into a collective agreement simply refuses to negotiate at every turn, issues threats and ultimatums, including the ultimate threat that they will simply walk abandoning the workforce, the community and the economy we not only have an economic crisis - but perhaps more importantly we have an economic crisis caused by a crisis in democracy - political and industrial democracy.

I welcome the commitments in the Scottish Government's 'Scotland's

Future' to greater employee involvement in industrial decision-making, including a role for employee representatives on company Boards and industry fora. These, together with the recently launched Review of Progressive Workplace Policies which the STUC was instrumental in creating (and which stands in stark contrast to the Coalition's Carr Review of legislation on Industrial Disputes announced before Christmas - which if followed through on after the UK election could have a significant impact on the ability of union members in key services and utilities to take industrial action) offer an opportunity to advance industrial democracy.

However, there are dangers in this particularly if the focus is on employee representation, rather than trade union representation, if employee involvement is limited and does not deliver genuine influence over company decisions, or employee involvement schemes are used by some employers to bypass and weaken trade union involvement in consultation and negotiation structures.

Measures to ensure the extension

of collective bargaining need to be accompanied by steps to promote union recognition; full access for union reps to all relevant company information, including financial information; provision for the appointment of elected and accountable union reps to company Boards; the representation of unions on Industry Leadership Groups; and a recognition that an extension of accountable forms of public and common ownership are an essential element of building meaningful industrial democracy and a fairer and ultimately more successful economy.

The Scottish constitutional debate is a debate about where power should lie and why. It will be of little real relevance unless Government, wherever it sits, has the power and is willing to use it to prevent the destructive actions of private equity capital or if workers through their union, do not have the power to influence the actions of an employer, and achieve a much more equal share on our national wealth. ■

Grahame Smith is General Secretary of the STUC



Say NO to ConDem cuts

For all public transport in public hands

For offshore safety

For trade-union rights

Bob Crow, General Secretary

Peter Pinkney, President

A real chance for workers

The fact that the current industrial relations arrangements in the UK are not working will come as absolutely no surprise to those in the trade union movement, who have for years now been driven back – sometimes physically - in their efforts to protect and improve the jobs and the terms and conditions of their members. Indeed ahead of the Scottish Trades Union Congress in April there are calls for a different approach to industrial relations including encouraging collective bargaining and increased industrial democracy. This realisation of the need for a different approach to industrial relations is not just coming from the union perspective however, as we have seen the recent establishment of an independent review group to look at workplace policies. The Cabinet Secretary John Swinney in introducing this new group said: “Together with STUC and senior business partners, the review will help foster a constructive and collaborative approach to industrial relations, helping create stronger relationships between government, employers and trade unions.”

This different relationship was also the basis of a report by the Jimmy Reid Foundation, which under the title of *Working Together* (www.reidfoundation.org/library) looked at industrial democracy across some of our European neighbours and the impact this had on industrial relations and its broader industrial consequences. The fact that the report found considerable benefit to the employer and the wider economy perhaps suggests why this topic is now being discussed in Scotland. The timing is very significant because the current

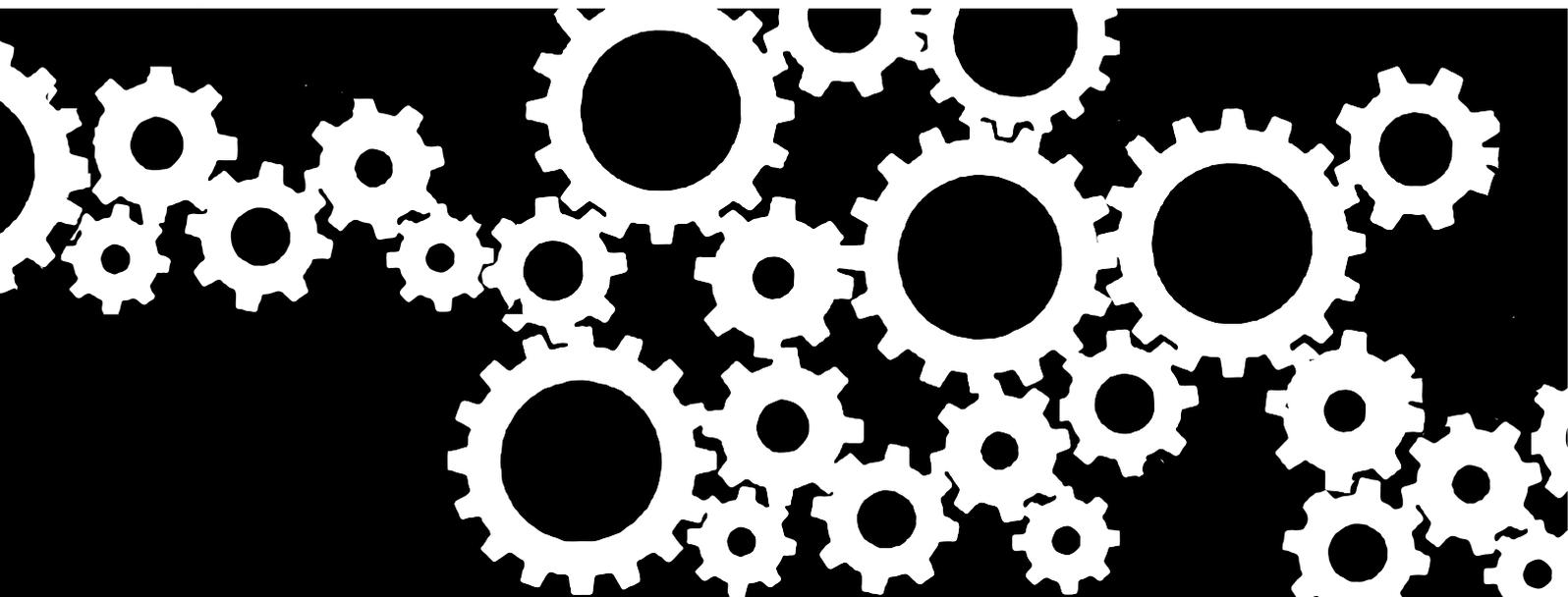
referendum debate has offered us the opportunity to consider possibilities that would not normally be available. It would be simple and accurate to say that the form of industrial democracy that was being considered in the JRF report is not possible within the current UK constitutional arrangements, as economic policy and much employment law sits firmly in the reserved powers category. This alone might normally be sufficient to terminate any realistic possibility of change, but whilst we are considering what an independent Scotland might look like, we really should contemplate what effect more positive industrial relations might have on the economy of the nation.

The JRF report compared two sets of countries, those with strong worker participation against those with weak worker participation. These were considered in terms of a series of indicators including; labour productivity, gross domestic expenditure on research and development, employment rate, educational attainment and poverty levels. In all of these indicators and more the countries with strong participation did better. If this is the case and business performs better, educational standards are better, environmental impact is better, why is the answer not blindingly obvious? I suggest the problem is deep-seated and is both cultural and structural.

In its simplest form any participation in decision-making by those outside of the management grade is seen as a diminution of power at both a corporate and personal level. This in itself is a weakness however as it leads to a hierarchal decision-making process where the tendency is to defer responsibility

and to pass problems up the line for resolution, when the clues to the solution are more likely to be down the line, nearer the point at which they were generated. This top-down hierarchy leads to a command and control culture that produces counter-intuitive weaknesses in an organisation, such as an over reliance on a small pool of brains at the top of a structure whilst ignoring all of the many other brains throughout the organisation. It can also lead to stagnation on one hand or extreme changes of direction on the other as leaders are replaced. This culture can also prevent the dissemination of accurate information, in particular the data required for informed decision-making is often sanitised on its journey in order to provide a positive impression of activity. This disconnect from the ‘shop floor’ can result in delays as excessive hierarchical approval is required for common sense decision-making, with the resultant micro management and inertia costing money.

This resistance to collaboration often leads to more and more detailed plans being drawn up in order to progress a matter. These take time to produce and are almost certain not to result in the expected outcomes. It will be common to see a new plan rolled out and be given an enthusiastic launch, which some time later will have stalled or have stagnant progress leading to increased costly supervision as the assumption is that the plan was not being followed correctly. Again the reality is that the disconnection between the planners and the operators has failed to recognise the on-the-ground situation. In a different environment this would not see the failure as a problem



John Duffy looks at the Reid Foundation paper on industrial democracy he co-authored and sees a genuine hope for real industrial democracy - but that the only chance it will happen is with independence.

but as an opportunity to improve the system. By holding on to the perception of power managers routinely cut off the best source of accurate data and practical problem solving they have.

From a trade union perspective there is often a desire to seek participation and a recognition that early discussion on a topic can often prove to be helpful. The traditional trade union approach however is almost totally reactive. An issue occurs and the local reps react, there is limited thought – outside of health and safety perhaps – to be proactive. The determination that something is ‘management’s job’ is of course a very simple measure and is clear and easily understood. But what happens if the rep has a suggestion? How does that get put forward and articulated? And do they run the risk of being accused of doing management’s job for them? When faced with a proposal it is considerably easier for the trade union officials to determine to fight knowing they will lose than it is to take responsibility for a course of action that may be the best solution in the circumstances but will be unpopular. Union members expect their reps to be fighting on their behalf but industrial disputes are not resolved on the picket line, but rather around the negotiating table. If the seat at the table is available without the need for the fight to get there, is that better or worse for the trade union and its members?

The biggest single issue in industrial relations is trust and that is a commodity that is in short supply when the industrial relations environment is structured in a combative, positional, side-taking way. The needs of the union and its members as well as the needs of the organisation and its shareholders all become secondary to winning, irrespective of the cost – to either side, the local economy or the national interest. The JRF *Working Together* report looks at alternatives to the current situation and provides a vision of what those options might provide. In that vision industrial democracy creates an opportunity to develop sustainable employment that can generate decent, well paid, long term jobs in such a way as our nation can start to invest properly in research and development, look after our environment, provide education and start to eradicate the scourge that the

current levels of poverty inflicts on us. Industrial democracy does not require the capitulation of trade unions or place constraints on management and good governance, it will not resolve all problems nor remove difficult decisions. It does however provide a basis for more constructive dialogue. It will be no easy task. This is not an off-the-shelf solution that can be picked up from Germany or Denmark etc. and rolled out in Scotland.

In order to deliver industrial democracy there are huge barriers to be overcome including the education of business, industry, corporate leaders, employer, owner and management on why this is good for them. It requires education of workers, employees and their representatives on why there are benefits for them. Business leaders, trade unionists, academics and politicians will have to work together to provide the message that it is in all of our interest to improve the current situation. The first movement to consider adopting some of the ideals put forward will require nurture and support. And that support will be required on a routine basis throughout any process, beyond the setting up and long into the future as this will not be an easy journey for either the individuals or the organisations involved. Any movement towards a new way of working will require help and advice on how to go about making that change, they will need practical assistance and experience in making that change and they will need support and encouragement to maintain progress when it will seem easier to give up. That level of support will require commitment from Government and it is encouraging to see the setting up of the review group and the fact that it contains a cross section of participants.

The final element in terms of requirements will be legislative. Both directly in support of changing the

current culture towards industrial democracy but also indirectly by aligning legislation, policy and practise and perhaps even the tax system to be

supportive of efforts to embed these new ideas. It may be the case that if people must be forced into doing something then there has been a failure to communicate the advantages fully; however it would give a clear indication of Government intension if all businesses over a certain size had

a requirement to place workers onto a management board. Other methods could incentivise the process, for example through public sector procurement, tax incentives, trade union rights, provisions for collective agreements etc.

As I look around our towns and cities and note the jobs, the industries and the workplaces that have been removed from them, I consider we face a stark choice; do we try and recover that by lowering wages to compete with China, by creating low paid, high turnover, unskilled work? Or do we try to create a new industrial landscape supporting the creation of highly skilled, well-waged jobs? If we wish to consider the later then we must also look to replace the old fashioned top down, hierarchical, command-and-control management methods and replace then with a new collegiate approach to industrialisation. In order to do so we will need to educate, to support and to take control of our legislative processes, our taxation system and our economic policy. Industrial Democracy is a desirable feature of a new landscape, but one that is only available to us as an independent Scotland. ■

John Duffy is Scottish Regional Secretary of the FBU

Jackson Cullinane will consider industrial democracy in a UK context in the next issue

It would be accurate to say that the form of industrial democracy that was being considered in the Reid Foundation report is not possible within the current UK constitutional arrangements

The university challenge

The forthcoming referendum on Scottish independence sits above Scotland's political landscape like little else has done in recent years. Depending on your view it is either casting a shadow or shining a light. All policy issues currently being debated are viewed through the prism of whether they help or hinder the Yes Scotland or Better Together campaigns. Critics of independence argue that Scotland is currently on hold, while proponents argue that eyes are being cast upwards and that what is up for grabs is no less than the very essence of the type of country we want to live and work in.

With both sides accusing each other of offering nothing more than jam tomorrow, the University and College Union is deliberately neutral in the referendum debate and is carefully analysing the arguments on both sides – fact reiterated by motions passed by branches in advance of our Congress. We are, however, absolutely determined to use the opportunity the debate has created to consider the essential purpose of higher education and of our universities in Scotland. While the nation considers its future it seems opportune to also reflect on what role education and higher education in particular will play whatever the outcome on September 18. This is particularly so given the role of higher education and its hugely positive impact both on those individuals undertaking study but also on the economy, our society and the nation's reputation and place in the world.

UCU Scotland's members' deliberations on the purpose of universities and what they are for is hugely wide ranging. It embraces the manifold benefits - economic, social, cultural, health and civic - of higher education to the individuals and to society as a whole and the communities we live in. As a trade union we unashamedly approach the debate from the perspective of our members – the workers in the sector – but we are also taking into account the union's commitment to students, and our fundamental belief in the value of education for itself. UCU members have been debating these issues in their workplaces, in branches, and in our

Scottish Executive Committee for some time. We look forward to the debate continuing at our forthcoming Scotland Congress.

Education is already one of the most devolved areas in Scotland due to historic differences in both school and post-school education, as compared to the rest of the UK. Prior to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the higher education budget and policy was determined by the Scottish Office, with a Scottish Higher Education Funding Council only established as late as 1992. Devolution in 1999 led to further divergence in higher education policies and Scotland has been able to pursue distinctive policy priorities, including on landmark issues such as tuition fees. The approach in Scotland on enhancing university governance has been dramatically different from the highly marketised agenda of the Westminster Government. UCU wholeheartedly endorsed the 2012 Von Prondzynski Review of HE Governance and continues to push for the implementation of all its recommendations in full. We are clear that inclusive, transparent and collegial governance systems, which value the academy, staff and students can make a positive difference.

Nevertheless, there remains much that is common between the sector in Scotland and that in the rest of the UK. The Research Councils that fund academic research are currently UK-wide and one of the few areas that are not devolved. Scotland is generally regarded as doing well from the councils – Scotland currently receives around 13 per cent of grants which is higher than a simple population share would give. The Scottish Government's white paper on independence imagines UK-wide funding arrangements continuing and envisages Scotland continuing to do well both on a UK playing field but also increasingly from sources outwith the UK too. What is clear is the need for continued research funding regardless of the constitutional set up, and it is vital that research investment is maintained to ensure our universities' continued success and to support uniquely Scottish research.

As a union we are less convinced

of the current method of allocating research funding, both here in Scotland and south of the border. The recent Research Excellence Framework assessed the quality of research in the UK, but we believe it is already having unintended consequences in universities. There needs to be a less high stakes research funding system, and a fairer way of recognising and rewarding the diversity of research in universities, which does not polarise university career paths, nor penalise those working to longer term or localised research goals.

Universities maintain collective pay bargaining arrangements on a UK-wide basis – a situation which is commonly (including by UCU Scotland) regarded as benefiting both employees and employers. Doing so allows the sector to negotiate pay on a fair, efficient and sector-led basis which reflects the UK-wide - and for many institutions and disciplines - worldwide nature of the labour market. Of course, that there is consensus on the need for UK-wide collective bargaining doesn't mean it follows that there is not also disagreement on our members' pay offers. Far from it. Since October 2013 we have seen an increasingly bitter pay dispute, with employers seeking to impose a real terms pay cut on our members equating to around a 13 per cent cut since October 2008. At the same time university leaders have been awarding themselves huge pay rises – on average receiving a rise of 5.1 per cent last year whilst refusing to give staff more than one per cent. Every university Principal in Scotland earns more than the First Minister and the Prime Minister, with the average annual salary across the UK for vice-chancellors now almost £250,000. Despite this pay dispute UCU sees value to benchmarking pay in universities across the UK, and we believe there is a strong case for continuing cross-border arrangements.

One of the other major issues our members face is the increasing casualisation of the workforce in higher education and increased use of zero hour and other atypical worker contracts. An investigation the UCU carried out in 2013 found that Universities and Colleges were more than twice as likely

Scotland's universities have policy-making almost completely devolved to Scotland but they remain part of a UK-wide system. Mary Senior considers what they mean to the independence debate - and Scotland afterwards.

as other workplaces to use zero-hour contracts. And the use of these casual zero hours contracts was more prolific in Scotland with two-thirds of institutions using them. The UCU's report into the issue found that the University of Edinburgh had more members of staff on zero hours contracts than any other in the UK. On the back of UCU Scotland publicising this and gaining political momentum against their use, the University signed a welcome agreement with UCU Scotland to work towards ending their use, work that is still in progress. Sadly casualisation within higher education in Scotland is about more than one University, and we will continue to work and campaign on the issue until the scourge of casual contracts is outlawed or so discredited that Universities are unable to use them.

One of the major differences between higher education post-devolution between Scotland and other areas of the UK are tuition fees. UCU Scotland believes that higher education

in Scotland should continue to be free at the point of entry and to that end the union opposes undergraduate tuition fees. Intellectual ability, not family background and income should determine participation. UCU believes that it is right that students who benefit from higher-than-average incomes after graduation should pay something back – but they should do so through progressive income tax.

Maintaining that basic principle that ability to learn should be the driver for someone accessing higher education also raises the question of how we widen access. The higher education sector in Scotland is attempting to address relatively disappointing and poor widening access levels at the moment through Outcome Agreements between institutions and the Scottish Funding Council, and the Post-16 Education Act commits universities to do more on increasing access. The level of student support is inextricably linked to this agenda, and Scotland needs to do more

to support students to enter and sustain study. Funding is an important part of the widening access and participation agenda. It also relies on other educational and social levers, including pre-school education and wider tackling poverty initiatives. Therefore, the ability to increase participation in higher education, and to ensure students from non traditional backgrounds benefit from a university education, will depend on both political will and funding provisions, whether in a devolved or independent context.

The sector in Scotland is of course not immune to the market given the introduction in 2012 of rest of UK fees of up to £9000 a year for students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This move, strongly opposed by UCU, does not enhance

our system in Scotland, and makes an undergraduate degree in Scotland the most expensive in these isles. The RUK fee does raise obvious questions for its continuation in an independent Scotland.

The referendum debate is also an opportunity to set out our desire for an immigration policy which is more in tune with the ambitions of higher education and the desire to be a welcoming, inclusive nation. The current UK government's draconian immigration system is damaging international engagement, and prevents the free movement of staff and students. The Fresh Talent initiative was pioneered in Scotland and should be reinstated.

There have always been differences in education policy in Scotland from the rest of the UK and devolution has accelerated many of these, often to Scotland's advantage. But there are also strengths in the benefit of cross border research funding and in the common cause between workers in the sector across the nations of the UK. UCU members across the UK face common hardships – be it casualisation, pervasive managerialism, or the ongoing dispute over pay.

It is true that the heightened nature of debate in the months to come can lead to organisations failing to have issues they raise properly considered other than whether their comments or campaigns are construed as supporting either Yes or No. But the reflective nature of a nation deciding its next steps mirrors UCU Scotland's decision to take stock and consider the future of higher education and our universities and what they mean to our economy and society. UCU Scotland is determined to use the opportunity of the referendum to ensure the sector is part of the debate, and to present our vision for the sort of higher education system we could have, which is inclusive, well funded, collegial and pushing the boundaries of learning and knowledge. We will do this alongside ensuring we value those working in the sector, to provide a fair deal for all. ■

Mary Senior is Scotland Official of the University and College Union

Scottish Left Review

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Hidden crowns

When constitutional change is under consideration, all of the protagonists have a responsibility to be clear about what would be involved in the particular model that they are proposing. You wouldn't even want to buy a used car from someone who refused to reveal what went on under the bonnet.

In relation to the role and responsibilities of the Head of State, both sides of the independence debate have signally failed to come clean about what their proposals would actually involve. As regards the Better Together campaign, there is in fact a great deal that the public does not know about the powers of the present monarchy, and how these powers are exercised. Here are some examples.

First of all, it is a little known fact that the Queen and Prince Charles, as the senior royals, have the right to be consulted and have to give their consent before any legislation is discussed in either the Westminster or Scottish parliaments, which potentially affects their hereditary revenues, personal property, or private interest. It is now known, following a campaign waged by the Guardian and others, that the list of subject areas covered by this royal right is extraordinarily broad: for example, the royals have been consulted on Westminster legislation relating to such topics as higher education, paternity pay, identity cards, and child maintenance. The Duchy of Cornwall was even consulted on the Apprenticeship Bill because the proposal to create a statutory basis for apprenticeships potentially affected the Duchy of Cornwall's interests as an employer. We also know, from information released by the Scottish Parliament, that the royals had to be consulted in advance on Holyrood legislation on topics as diverse as salmon conservation, planning, the rights of relatives of mesothelioma (an asbestos

related cancer) victims to compensation and the Bill to introduce a minimum price for alcohol in Scotland.

What is clear from this hard-won information, therefore, is that the royals do indeed have the right to be consulted in advance on a wide range of legislation. What the long-suffering British public is not permitted to know however, is the detail of how the royals exercise this right, and on what effect it has on legislation being passed. There is no doubt that the royals have the potential power to make a major impact on legislation: as pointed out in the guidance

to civil servants finally released through freedom of information on 15 January 2013, if advanced consent from the royals is not forthcoming, then a major part of the relevant bill might be removed.

Another area where the royal family operates under the radar is in relation to freedom of information. In January 2011, special exemptions were written into the UK Freedom of Information Act granting absolute

protection to the royals from public scrutiny. Scotland followed suit. So while we do know, for example, that Prince Charles writes extensively to government departments, and also has frequent meetings with Ministers and civil servants, the public has no way of knowing on what topics he is lobbying, or what effect he is having in influencing policy.

Paradoxically, therefore, if Scotland votes No in the coming referendum, there is a great deal we do not know about the powers of the head of state and how they are exercised. Even more paradoxically, the same is also true if Scotland votes Yes, as we will now see.

The SNP's position is that an independent Scotland would retain the monarchy. In a booklet issued to help activists in the early 2000s they gave a

little more detail as follows:

"The SNP proposes that the Queen and her successors remain Head of State, in the way that she is presently Head of State in fifteen other independent Commonwealth countries. The constitution which the SNP favours will define the powers of the Monarch, removing a number of her present powers, though she will still confirm Parliament's nomination of a Prime Minister.... If, in the future, the people of Scotland wished to change these arrangements, they would be free to do so by amending the constitution through a referendum, and it is the SNP's policy that the issue should be tested by such a referendum once Independence is fully in effect. Ultimately, the decision rests with the people of Scotland."

In fact, in the detail in their recent White Paper, the Scottish Government did not specify which powers might be removed: the following questions about the SNP's position on the monarchy therefore appear unresolved.

First, there is the question of whether the monarchy should retain its exemption from Freedom of Information. It seems clear that it should not. Intervention and correspondence by royals, if kept secret, could lead to abuse of power. Their position gives them huge powers of influence and of patronage, and they therefore cannot be seen as private individuals. Since their influence comes ultimately from the state, they are intrinsically part of the state machinery, and their correspondence should therefore be as open as that of any other government department.

Second, should the monarchy have the right to be consulted, and to influence legislation at stages during the passage of a Bill? It seems clear they should not. Even if one accepted that the Queen had a right as head of state to be consulted on a few critical issues such as war, under what possible stretch of imagination could this extend to asbestos related disease or the price of alcohol. But in her capacity as a private individual, the monarch should get no more rights than any other private individual.

Third, there is the question of the

Jim and Margaret Cuthbert argue that at the moment neither side in the independence debate is willing to tell us exactly what powers our undemocratic Monarchy would have. This simply isn't good enough.

status of the Queen in relation to taxes and subsidies. At present in the UK, the monarch is exempt from Inheritance Tax. This should clearly not continue in an independent Scotland.

Fourth, what is to be done about the Crown Estates in Scotland? Under UK stewardship, exercised by the Crown Estates Commissioners, we have seen the Crown Estate Commissioners acting primarily as a property investment company, putting the pursuit of profit before the interests of Scottish communities and the Scottish economy. One by-product has been years of disquiet and anger among Scotland's coastal communities at the actions and inaction of the Commissioners. There is also an issue about the UK focus of the Crown Estate Commissioners in that their portfolio is seen as a UK entity with, for example, properties sold in Scotland, and the resulting revenues used to buy property elsewhere in the UK. The recent recommendations by the Scottish Affairs Committee to devolve

much greater control to Scotland were rebuffed by the UK government, with only fig leaf changes being made. In an independent Scotland with a continuing monarchy, would the crown estates be returned to the proper stewardship of the Scottish people, and managed by their representatives, that is, the Scottish Parliament?

Fifth, as regards the funding of the monarchy, the SNP needs to make it clear where it stands. At present, the most direct source of funding is through the provisions of the UK Sovereign Grant Act, which essentially hypothecates 15 per cent of the Crown Estate profits to the monarch, and which, in these times of austerity, still delivered a 16 per cent increase this year in the monarch's income from the state. This does not, however, represent the total cost of the monarchy. For one thing, the cost of security is not included in the above, and these costs are substantial. The single event of the marriage of Zara Phillips, the Queen's granddaughter, in Edinburgh,

cost the Scottish police £400,000. In addition, it is clear that the UK monarchy also gets substantial support in the form of upkeep of royal parks, and the services of government departments like the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence (though the amounts involved are never precisely identified or added up).

The SNP really need to be clear about just how Scotland would fund its head of state. In particular, it seems unthinkable that an independent Scotland would agree to an open-ended commitment to hand over a percentage of the revenues or profits from Scotland's public estate and seabed. So the SNP should do something which it has signally failed to do so far, namely, to make a firm

statement that an independent Scotland would not be bound by anything like the provisions of the UK Sovereign Grant Act. There are, in fact, good precedents in the shape of other Commonwealth countries, on how the monarchy should be paid for. Australia and New Zealand, for example, pay only those costs associated with functions actually carried out by the monarchy in those countries' own territory. The SNP should make a firm commitment that, if Scotland votes to continue with the monarchy, it should adopt the same principle.

Overall, therefore, we have seen that, as regards the vitally important question of the head of state, both sides in the independence debate are failing to tell the electorate what their particular constitutional model would imply.

This is not merely bizarre: it also represents a major missed opportunity on the part of the SNP. Suppose the SNP had addressed the questions identified above, and had put forward a platform where the role, powers, influence, and funding of the Scottish head of state (whether the existing monarch or a president) had been fully set out and specified. The SNP would then be in a strong position to challenge the unionists to come clean on what the existing powers and influence of the UK monarchy actually are – powers and influence which, as we have seen, the UK public is currently prevented from knowing. The unionist response could take one of two possible forms. Either they would refuse to divulge this information – a stance which would count against them in the independence campaign. Or, for the first time, the UK public would be granted a clear statement of the actual powers and costs of the monarchy: this would be something which would be beneficial in its own right. And if, as the available circumstantial evidence strongly suggests, the monarchy is actually currently exercising undue power and influence, confirmation of this would again play badly for the unionists in the independence debate.

So come on SNP. There is an open goal here waiting for you to score. ■

Jim and Margaret Cuthbert are independent economists

OUR SCOTLAND SERVICES FUTURE

PCS sends greetings to all delegates attending the 117th Annual Congress of the STUC



67/66

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Reviews

NORDIC LIGHTS: Work, Management and Welfare in Scandinavia

Sandberg (A), SNS Förlag 2013,
ISBN 9789186949372

Available as an ebook from www.akesandberg.se/nordic-lights/

The global dominance of neoliberal ideas has led to a major decline of social and environmental justice in Europe. Bastions of social democracy such as Scandinavia, never of course perfect models, have been seriously threatened by these neoliberal ideas but have actively resisted with some successes. Now the Scottish referendum is looming, a great deal of interest is being shown in the Nordic circle by both

sides: to prove or disprove the view that small and relatively enlightened countries could be political and economic models for an independent Scotland. Some commentators have mistakenly described those sympathetic to the social and economic policies of Scandinavia as being uncritical whilst they themselves remain befuddled by and sympathetic to the reactionary and vicious policies of the coalition.

In this context *Nordic Lights*, a recent book edited by a group of social scientists on Work, Management and Welfare in Scandinavia, should be essential reading from empirical and theoretical perspectives. The book explores a series of tensions These include ones surrounding welfare and individualism, gender issues in new management strategies, business process re-engineering, flexible working, lean production, managing work environment, precarious work, employees on private sector boards, and threats to trade unions from new management approaches and production systems. Particular sectoral groups are examined too such as those in digital and print media and developments in Ford and Volvo after ownership changed. All is not gloom and doom. The authors report that the impact of global capitalism has been slowed by union membership, workplace organisation and other structures as well as by the existence of many nationally agreed collective agreements. But even so, conservative administrations slashed social insurance funding, unemployment insurance system and training budgets for new jobs.

In certain fields, the resistance has been even more successful and the Scandinavian approach offers some indicators for strategies that could be adopted in Scotland post-referendum whatever the result. For example, Annette Kamp and Klaus Nielsen provide a complex and subtle analysis of Nordic trends relating to the “Work Environment Management” concept and consider new developments to workplace health and safety. The concept appeared in the 1970s in Scandinavia drawing on industrial relations ideas with democracy

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

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



Mick Whelan
General Secretary

Alan Donnelly
President

Kevin Lindsay
Scottish Officer

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

and participation of employees at its centre. Health and safety at work was placed on equal footing with quality and environmental protection: something that never occurred in the UK where market thinking dominates regulatory approaches and has even led to changes in mission statements of bodies such as HSE charged with protecting worker health and safety to include economic growth as a key objective.

The Nordic debate at the time was whether this ensured workplace health and safety would be prioritised or would be marginalised and neutralised. Trade union safety reps and safety committees were viewed as part of the 'management of health and safety' but in a far less hostile work environment to that prevailing in the UK. Tripartism was also less tokenistic and stultifying in the Nordic circle than it proved to be in the UK. Significantly, the Scandinavian application of work environment management was not influenced in any major way by such things as lean production, business process re-engineering and balanced score cards. In the UK we would consider the lack of these influences as a very positive feature.

As time passed, more management-oriented ideas were introduced in Nordic countries and today what might be termed as mainstream 'human resource management' ideas have influenced employers stressing motivation, self-management and individual developments as the key to success. This linked to 'soft law' ideas that supposedly lead to individual enterprises improving their own working environments. Nevertheless the authors conclude "It is a striking fact that many of the forms of management (Lean Production etc.) that have passed through Scandinavian enterprises in the last 30 years have not had a stronger impact in the field of working environment. This is probably because management of the working environment is

implemented in close interaction with public regulation, and the enterprise therefore has to consider the question of legitimacy in relation to the surrounding society" (p319).

In the UK, including Scotland, the 'soft laws' and 'better' and responsive regulation agenda has proved exceptionally influential across all parties and threatens efforts to maintain never mind improve basic work and wider environmental health and safety conditions. In the Nordic countries, the commitment to effective public regulation on hazards on the other hand has wide societal approval and appears to operate relatively harmoniously with efforts to support the economic activity

of SMEs. This may perhaps be because the Nordic countries not only accept the analysis that healthy work and healthy workers are good for the economy but adopt the analysis in practice.

As one American commentator on the book has noted: "The Nordic and Scandinavian countries have long been beacons for people around the world who were eager to see workplaces transformed into spaces where working people could express their humanity and aspirations" (Adler in Sandberg 2013: 7). With all its faults, this Nordic model still has much to commend it to Scotland. ■

■ Prof Andrew Watterson



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Kick Up The Tabloids

PIRATES STEAL INDY SCOTLAND PANDAS AND LOTTERY TICKETS

Elections to the European Parliament have never really caught the public's imagination and turnout tends to be low. But I do think it is important that we vote; these could be our last-ever European elections.

If we vote Yes in the Referendum, we will then be immediately thrown out of the European Union, according to David Cameron and many others in the Better Together campaign. This is one of the more credible scare stories which have been trotted out in the right-wing press since the start of this year. At one time or another most of the following claims have been made. One or two, I've made up. See if you tell which is which.

1: If Scotland vote Yes, we could see a return to piracy within British waters, as ships are ambushed on lawless seas. This claim was made by David Cameron no less. So, if anyone is thinking of voting Yes, don't be surprised if the Arran ferry is regularly hijacked by gangs of cutlass-wielding one-legged ne-er-dowells with parrots on their shoulders.

2: In the event of a Yes vote, Universal Care for the Elderly will be Unsustainable, a claim recently made by the UK Government. This totally ignores the fact that we already have universal care for the elderly and it is sustainable now. Furthermore, this is Scotland we're talking about. Very few people live to be elderly.

3: If Scotland votes Yes, an Independent Scotland Will Face a Pensions Black Hole. If this claim was not made by Vince Cable, it was made by some other member of the Coalition cabinet. And my reaction to it is similar as to the last claim. Anyone lucky enough to live beyond retirement age in Scotland is going to be coining it in. There has to be some advantage in living beyond 65 in country with the lowest life expectancy in Western Europe.

4: If Scotland votes Yes, we will no longer get the Gulf Stream, so our winters will become even colder. So, if anything, life expectancy will be even

lower after independence. Well done if you spotted that I made this one up, but then it is only slightly more more ridiculous than this;

5: If Scotland votes Yes The Royal Bank Of Scotland would leave Scotland. This is according to Vince Cable, so obviously it's complete bollocks. The RBS is a multi-national corporation which owns banking operations in thirty-eight different countries. So maybe Vince does have a point, as it is almost inconceivable that they would want to operate in as many as thirty-nine.

6: If Scotland votes Yes, we will have to be in a different time zone from England. This claim was made as long ago as 1997, just after we had voted for devolution. It was made by Jeffrey Archer, and indeed, it is still widely regarded as his best work of fiction to date. Archer said that Scotland should be forced to be one hour behind England, until it was pointed out to him that Thurso was already thirty-five years behind England.

7: If Scotland votes Yes, you will be more likely to die of cancer. Believe it or not, this claim has been made on a pro-Union website.

8: If Scotland votes Yes, Scotland will still be at war with the USA. Yes, that's true. The treaty which ended the American War of Independence was signed by the whole of the UK. So, depending on whether we became independent, we could be fighting a war of independence against a country that is already independent. That's according to *The Independent*.

9: If Scotland votes Yes, Edinburgh Zoo will have to hand back the Pandas to China. OK, I made that one up, but it's no more ridiculous than this one:

10: If Scotland votes Yes, no-one in Scotland will be able to win the Lottery, as UK Lottery tickets will no longer be on sale in an independent Scotland. This has been claimed, despite the fact that we can currently buy tickets for the

Irish Lottery. Furthermore, the idea that Camelot would voluntarily give up 10 per cent of its profits is ludicrous.

11: If Scotland votes Yes, we will no longer be able to access large sections of the internet, as we will not be able to connect with websites or e-mail addresses ending in dot.co.uk. Well done if you noticed, I did make that last one up. However, I got the idea from this claim made by Better Together:

12: If Scotland votes Yes, you won't be able to receive phone calls from England as the rest of the UK will not know the international dialling code for Scotland.

13: If Scotland votes Yes, over six-hundred-thousand people will immediately leave the country. I read that claim in the Daily Express. What struck me unusual was that the Express should write a scare story about thousands of people flooding out of the country. They usually tend to warn us about thousands of people flooding in.

14: If Scotland votes Yes, women all over the World will be more likely to be raped. Believe it or not, someone actually made this claim. Indeed, the person who made this claim happens to be the Lib-Dem spokesperson on Overseas Aid.

You may have thought some of the claims you have just read are ridiculous, and many of them are indeed barmy. Implausible as it may sound, I have the best until last:

15: A Yes Vote Could De-Stabilise Northern Ireland. You did read that correctly. According to the Financial Times, "If Scotland were to become independent, its borders with Northern Ireland would be a nightmare to patrol".

Geography was not my best subject at school and national boundaries can be redrawn, but the last time I looked, Scotland's border with Northern Ireland was quite a big bit of sea.

So do you use your vote in the Euro elections. Just don't vote for any of the people whose ideas are quoted above. ■

LANDLORDS HIT HOUSING BENEFIT JACKPOT

In Scotland there are 97,168 households renting private accommodation and entitled to housing benefit. GMB has shown that wealthy individuals and companies get housing benefit for houses they rent to tenants.

Harry Donaldson, GMB Secretary for Scotland said, "This research lifts the lid on the mainly secret payments to landlords who are the real winners from Britain's welfare system. We see taxpayers cash subsidising buy-to-let empires where the money ends up tax free in tax havens.

The research shows the rich and powerful sucking up taxpayer's money through housing benefit. This is made possible by out of control rents and a lack of affordable and council homes that so many hard working people and their families desperately need.

This should bring both shame and action from this government to end this exploitation of public money.

These billions going into fat cats wallets and offshore tax havens would be better spent building houses and homes for real working people. Shovelling millions of pounds to the likes of castle owning barons, whilst so many either wait for a home or have to pay exorbitant rents, is a public scandal. It is also bad economics for the nation."

- **Strathmore Estates Holding Ltd** – Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne, the Queens cousin and owner of Glamis Castle. £11,500 from Angus.
- **Moray Estates Development Company** – Earl of Moray, owner of Darnaway Castle. £10,000 from Moray.
- **Bellgrove Hotel** – £1.56m from Glasgow
- **Martin & Co – Letting Agents**, £3.1m from 20 districts nationally. £26,000 from Stirling, £365,000 from Fife, £78,000 from Clackmannanshire and £182,000 from South Lanarkshire.
- **Hovepark Lettings Ltd** – Brighton based lettings agent. £455,000 from North Ayrshire.
- **Argyll Estates** – £126,000 from Argyll and Bute. 50,000 acre estate including Inveraray Castle, home to Torquhil Campbell, the Duke of Argyll.
- **Wemyss Properties Ltd** – Owned by William Wemyss, part of a Scottish business dynasty which includes property, whisky and gin production and energy production. £141,000 from Fife.
- **Haddo Estate** – £42,000 from Aberdeenshire. Owned by the Marquess and Marchioness of Aberdeen.

Join UNISON to campaign with the STUC for A Fairer Scotland



UNISON's priorities for A Fairer Scotland

The debate on Scotland's constitutional future before this year's referendum is only likely to deliver concrete benefits for working people if we ensure that our concerns and priorities are placed at its very heart.

UNISON's approach to constitutional questions is driven by the interests of our members, by the sort of Scotland we want and deserve to live in. This means that for us, precise constitutional arrangements are the end point and not the starting point of the debate.

We must first define the sort of Scotland we wish to see and then try and examine the likelihood of differing constitutional arrangements on offer to deliver on that vision.

Our role is not to promote or condemn the politics of national identity, Scottish or British. We should not accept at face value any of the claims from any side of the constitutional debate.

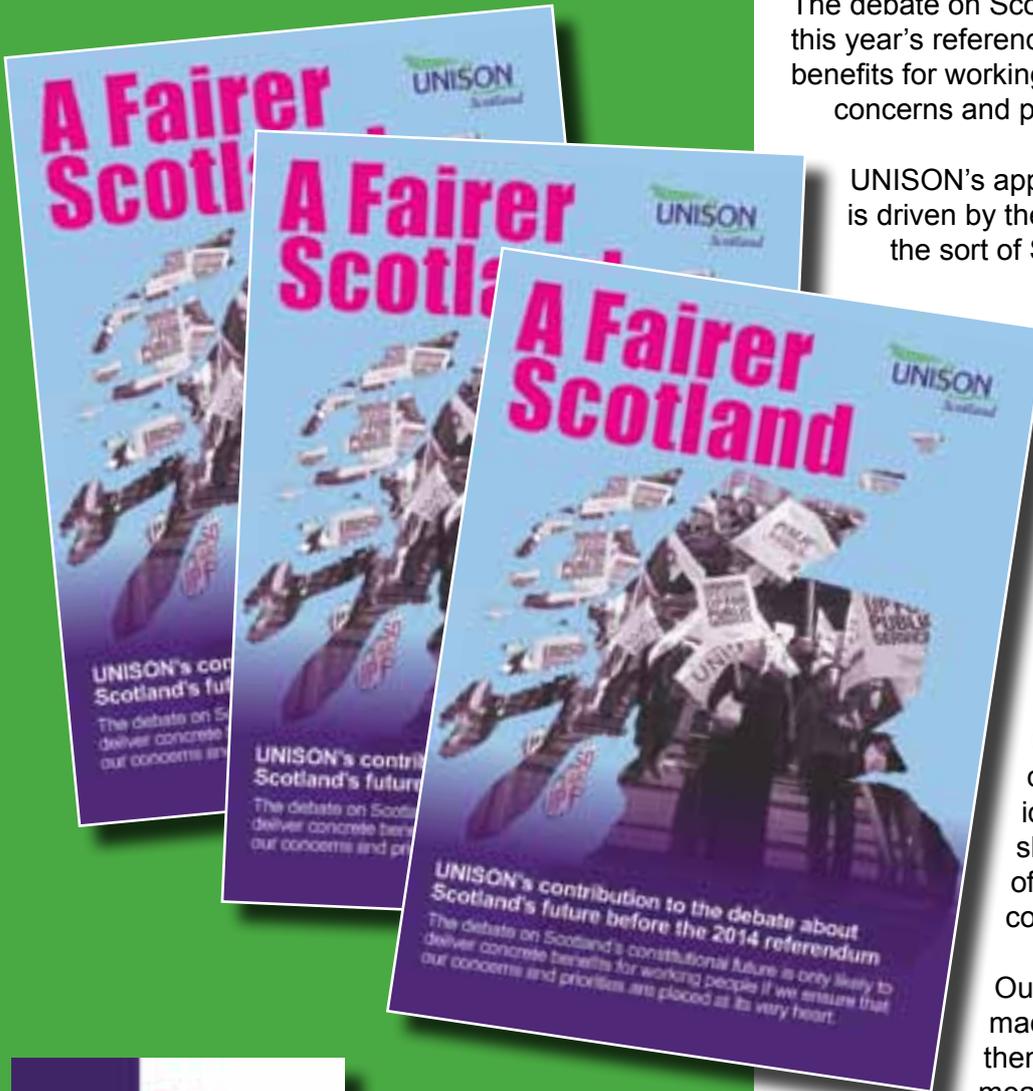
Our role is to examine assertions made by all sides in the debate, to get them to spell out what their proposals mean for working people.

Our objective is tackling inequalities, poor health and deprivation. Doing so is social change - and unless it is explained how this is to be achieved, arguments for or against constitutional change mean very little.

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