

Scottish Socialist VOICE



Inside
this
issue...

Independence: SSP
co-spokesperson
Sandra Webster's
thoughts on the Yes
campaign launch

• see page 12

Spanish miners strike:
echoes of 1984-5 as
workers defend jobs,
pits and communities

• see page 11

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AFTER THE JUBILEE - THE CRISIS REMAINS



BRITONS NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES?

FIFTY unpaid jobseekers and 30 'apprentices' on less than half the minimum wage were bussed-in from Bristol, Bath and Plymouth to steward the Queen's £12million Jubilee River Pageant by Tomorrow's People - a charity headed by a Tory Baroness. They were forced to sleep under a bridge so they wouldn't be late, and were ordered to change into security uniforms in public. After 14-hours work they were taken to a waterlogged campsite to put their own tents up in the dark. On top of all this, they had no access to toilets for 24 hours.

by Ken Ferguson

AFTER weeks of royalist propaganda, days of revolting fawning from 'loyal' politicians, sycophantic hacks gushing platitudes, parades, pageants, lunches and dinners - it is over.

Through the fog of 'god bless you ma'am-ism' looms the truth that the loyal subjects still face unemployment, job and service cuts, falling living standards and aus-

terity stretching to the far horizon. For pro-Independence Scots in particular, the efforts of the monarchy-booster should sound warning bells.

The pro-unionists and the British state will use the monarchy to drive home their case for that state and for pro-Independence leaders such as Alex Salmond to attempt to ride the royal tiger comes close to being an unpardonable folly.

Far from the fable peddled by the BBC and others of a monarchy above politics smiling sweetly on a grateful people, the reality is that it stands at the pinnacle of class power, militarism and unspeakable inequality.

The idea that a society based on a warmongering British state headed by the monarchy entrenching gross inequality and poverty alongside mega bucks for a tiny minority can be rec-

onciled with social justice is simply untenable.

That's why in the months ahead, the fight against cuts and sackings must go on alongside a determined drive to break with the British state and its policies of austerity and war.

The case for a democratic Scottish republic is stronger than ever and must be put in the weeks ahead in the drive to win a Yes vote.

Where next for Yes campaign?

by Colin Fox

THE Scottish Socialist Party can be pleased with the part we played in the launch of the Yes Scotland campaign. Not only did we manage to make our presence felt at the event itself but we also conveyed our distinctive programme for a modern democratic republic over to a mass audience in the week running up to it.

After coverage of our submission to the Scottish Governments Referendum Bill was carried in the *Sunday Herald* (and how important that has proved to be, given the saturation coverage of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee) we were able to re-state our vision of a socialist Independent Scotland, distinct from the SNP's capitalist and royalist version.

Beneficial

All in all, we received more beneficial press coverage for our programme and message than at any time in the last five years and for all the right reasons.

Seventeen national newspapers and television stations re-

ported how our programme compared to the SNP's. Their spin-doctors, I am informed, were not best pleased.

The Yes Scotland launch has been criticised in some predictable quarters for being full of 'showbiz pizzazz' and low in political 'beef'.

But that frankly is to miss the point of a launch event aimed at a mass audience. Whatever its faults, it has certainly put the wind up Alistair Darling and his No campaign, who are now desperately running around trying to raise £1million to match that opening gambit or face further charges of having been stuck in the starting gate again in a two horse race.

But more important of course is the key question everyone on board the Yes Scotland 'battle bus' is now rightly asking, what next? How is the Independence movement going to reach out from beyond its snazzy New Town HQ to mobilise the Scottish people? And where are its decision-making structures?

Is Alex Salmond prepared to allow others to stand beside him in a genuine partnership? How

do grassroots supporters play their part in winning over a majority of Scotland's citizens to Independence?

These questions are vitally important and the stakes are high. It will take great leadership skills, patience and tact to keep the Independence coalition united and focused on winning majority support.

Fearful

The key question is - does Alex Salmond intend to lead an open, democratic, fully inclusive, collegiate alliance or not? The SNP has much to gain by so doing. Our opponents are predicting he will put up the 'House Full' notices so soon after we all gathered so successfully in the Cineworld 'inclusion zone'.

But it is also necessary to clarify our programme and to discuss our strategy and tactics for winning the majority we seek. It would appear that the SNP is set on an 'easy as she goes' approach designed not to frighten those voters it believe are fearful of what Independence may mean for them.

In my view this strategy is timid and doomed to fail. With polls suggesting 35 per cent support Independence we must recognise that caution is no way to win over those who remain sceptical.

If the don't knows are the key to success in this Referendum, the best way to win them over is by inspiring them with the democratic and socially progressive vision which Independence at it's most potent delivers.

I will be meeting SNP campaign chief Angus Robertson this week to discuss the next steps in the Yes Scotland project.

I think it is necessary to democratise and develop the movement and to radicalise the message. Central to victory is persuading working class people in Scotland they and their children will be better off under Independence.

And we in the Yes movement must provide the economic facts and figures to provide activists and spokespersons with the tools necessary to persuade people to vote Yes in October 2014.

PHOTO: Craig Maclean



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER: but is Alex Salmond prepared to allow others to stand beside him in a genuine partnership?

INDY RADICALS ORGANISE



by Andy Bowden

FOR supporters of an Independent Scottish Republic it might have been tempting just to hide under the covers during the holiday weekend until the wall to wall Jubilee mania ended.

Fortunately there was one positive alternative to the deference to the Royals - the first organising meeting of the Radical Independence Conference (RIC).

The RIC, which now has backing from the SSP, both Green MSPs, a swathe of student leaders, Trade Union officials and cultural figures like Iain Banks and Pat Kane, has the potential to enormously re-energise and inspire the Scottish Left.

The organising meeting on Saturday 2 June was made up of approximately 100 people - showing just how big the conference itself could be.

Commitment

Its basic five point programme - commitment to a Republic, opposition to all discrimination, a social alternative to austerity, a green Scotland and a country that is internationalist and against war is simple but has the potential to act as the voice of the progressive green and socialist left in the Independence campaign.

Discussion covered four topics - making the conference as diverse as possible, the format of the conference itself, media work and campaigns.

There was wide agreement that the conference should reflect the diversity in Scotland - unlike the official Yes launch



FRESH START: 100 attended the RIC organising meeting, a great sign for the conference

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

which disappointingly was 80 per cent male. This discussion also took place when determining the conference format.

There was widespread agreement that the conference shouldn't be dominated by the usual faces, and that no single group must dominate.

Media work was also discussed with plans to launch a twitter for the RIC.

So far there has been little notice of the RIC bar one article in *The Scotsman* - ironically from Scottish Thatcherite George Kerevan, who correctly identified the threat to Labour Unionism in Scotland that a pro-Indy left could pose.

Discussion of conference campaigning covered many aspects - from the need to campaign for 16-17 year olds to have the right to vote, to the understanding that we have a limited amount of time to make the case for Independence.

Potential

The Radical Independence Conference has the potential to bring together different strands of the left that are independent of any groups or parties.

The Scottish Socialist Party can play a role both in the RIC and the official Yes Scotland campaign, with the understanding that the RIC will not attack the official

campaign, but can take positions - on Independence, the Banks, child poverty, etc - that the official campaign may be unable or unwilling to take.

The RIC represents a fresh start for the Scottish Left with a prize too big not to take seriously - the breaking of the British state, and the formation of an Independent Scotland that can be influenced and directed by Left and progressive ideas far more effectively than the dinosaur UK state.

• *There will be more organising meetings in the run up to the conference in October.*

Details can be found here: indyconference.wordpress.com

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As the referendum's No campaign plans its launch, **John McAllion** takes a look...

WHILE our hearts hope for a fair and principled debate that will bring out the best on both sides of the independence referendum campaign, our heads remind us to expect the worst from the No campaign over the next two and a half years.

Whether we like it or not, the politics of fear works. The US race for the Presidency has already seen tens of millions of dollars spent by candidates and their supporters on attack ads aimed at discrediting their opponents. The huge cost is justified by the results.



THE BATTLE OVER BRITAIN

In modern politics smears, distortions and half-truths can make the difference between winning and losing. Negativity works.

The No campaign has been quick to emphasise the negative. Scotland is too small to cut it as an independent country.

Without the protection of the Bank of England and the pound it couldn't survive among the sharks of international capitalism. The current euro crisis would leave Scotland and its banks exposed and vulnerable.

In Alistair Darling's doom-laden words, an independent Scotland would mean taking massive risks with our economic future.

According to Scottish Tory leader Ruth Davidson it would also mean running a huge fiscal

deficit, inheriting a massive debt burden and loss of our AAA credit rating. Our jobs, savings, pensions and mortgages would all be undermined. Better then to cling to our British nurse for fear of something much, much worse.

At the same time it is suggested that to seek independence is to abandon the cause of social justice. The fight against poverty, we are told, does not begin with a border on a map. Solidarity does not have a flag. Equality does not need a passport.

The fact that Britain already has a border, flag and passport is conveniently forgotten. British border, flag and passport are unquestionably good. Scottish border, flag and passport are unquestionably bad.

We can expect much more in this vein as the referendum campaign picks up steam. But the more they tell lies about the consequences of Scottish independence, the more we need to tell the truth about the cost of remaining part of a Britain that continues to strut its stuff on the international stage as a global power broker.

Britain basks in the status afforded by its permanent seat in the security council of the United Nations. Yet that seat comes at a terrible cost.

The weapons of mass destruction based on the Clyde are part of that cost. So too is the estimated £130billion price for their renewal. After the US and China, Britain is the third highest military spender in

the world – no less than £40billion in 2011 alone.

Britain is a warfare state, having been involved in 22 separate wars or conflicts since 1945. Such a state armed to the teeth with the latest weaponry can never deliver social justice or equality. Trident comes at the expense of decent health and social care for our elderly.

The latest line in aircraft carriers necessitates slashing back our welfare state. Our poor pay the price of British grandstanding on a global stage. Nor did Britain bail out the retail banks that look after workers' wages and savings.

Then Chancellor Darling spent more than a trillion pounds bailing out an investment banking sector that all but

brought the global economy to its knees.

In doing so, he helped to preserve a super-rich elite that hide behind the hedge funds, venture capital and private equity companies that exist to ensure wealth continues to be redistributed from the have-nots to the haves.

To cap it all, Britain brings with it a constitution that leaves a hereditary monarchy secure on its family throne, that guarantees sinecures for establishment placed people in an unelected House of Lords, and that chooses the House of Commons by an electoral system that ensures power only ever shifts between parties that offer no serious challenge to establishment power.

Let the battle begin.

SNP support alone is not enough

by Campbell Martin

LET me get one thing straight from the outset – there can be only one ‘Yes’ campaign.

Everyone who recognises the benefits of Scotland re-taking its independence should work together to deliver that outcome in the 2014 referendum.

Now, that isn’t to say I agree with how the Yes Campaign was launched or how it has

‘independence thing’ with other political parties. The token non-SNP politician allowed to speak was the Green Party’s Patrick Harvie.

Then there was the much-reported software ‘glitch’, which resulted in opponents of independence being paraded on the Yes Campaign website as supporters, simply because they had clicked to ‘follow’ the campaign on Twitter or Facebook.

whiz-kids have now tweaked the system, so that only those who have actually signed-up in support of the Yes Campaign will appear on the site: but the fundamental error represented a spectacular own-goal and allowed the British Unionist press to mis-report that the pro-independence campaign was falsifying its levels of support. Part of the reason for these ‘mistakes’ lies in the SNP’s new-found arrogance:

did not then, and do not now, support the creation of an independent Scotland.

However much the SNP fool themselves into believing they are omnipotent, the reality is that even a sizeable part of its own support remains to be convinced of the case for independence, and it will take more than Scots-born Hollywood actors and hi-tech computer software to persuade those voters into the ‘Yes’ camp.

SNP support alone will not deliver sufficient votes to win the referendum in 2014, so the Yes Campaign has to fully embrace all strands of the independence movement.

Ownership

The SNP has to accept it cannot be precious about ‘ownership’ of the campaign – those on the left of politics will only vote Yes if they are persuaded the prospect of a socialist Scotland will be enhanced, which is why the Scottish Socialist Party must be afforded a greater and more prominent role in the campaign.

It is also the case that the Independence Referendum will not be won solely in cyberspace or by attempting to emulate American presidential campaigns.

Without doubt, the use of new technology and social networking sites has a significant part to play but more emphasis needs to be placed on building support for independence in local communities, talking to real people, knocking on real doors, speaking to real public meetings, leafleting real streets and real workplaces.

Real voters – turning out at real polling places – will decide the Independence Referendum.



SHOW MUST GO ON: but socialists and greens must not be sidelined during the campaign

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

been operated in its first few weeks of existence.

I am already on record criticising the SNP’s stage-managed launch extravaganza: the SSP was right to attend, but national co-spokesperson Colin Fox should have been given the opportunity to address the event.

Much as I appreciate the support of actors Alan Cumming and Brian Cox, allowing them speaking-time before the co-convenor of Scotland’s socialist party betrayed two things – the SNP’s control of the event, and their reluctance to share the

Using photos and names of your opponents on the front-page of your site – and implying their support for your cause – smacks of amateur-hour in terms of political campaigning.

Error

But this was supposed to be extremely sophisticated software – based on the system used in the successful 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama – and the SNP, we are frequently told, has the most effective campaigning team in the UK.

Apparently, the SNP’s IT

having swept to victory, and majority government, at the Scottish Parliament Election in 2011, the party appears to have fallen into the trap of believing they are infallible. They’re not.

Much of the vote that propelled the SNP to victory last year was simply an endorsement of Alex Salmond’s relative competence as First Minister, and a rejection of the alternatives on offer, particularly the Iain Gray-led Labour Party. Many people who voted SNP at the last Scottish Parliament Election

END £2.65 SLAVE WAGES



by *Richie Venton, SSP national workplace organiser*

“**YOU** must be joking!” - “Surely they can’t get away with that?” - “I was earning that much as an apprentice 40 years ago!”

These are sample reactions - in several cases with the ‘swearie words’ removed - from hundreds who have queued up to sign SSP petitions demanding an end to the crime of youth slave labour being perpetrated by several councils.

Mass unemployment scars communities across Scotland. A whole new generation is being lost to a future of joblessness, hopelessness and despair. The choice on offer to many young people is enforced, impoverished idleness or slave wages.

Modern apprenticeships are desperately sought after by working class school leavers, but are used as modern wage slavery. Several councils pay these young workers the princely sum of £87.50 a week, £2.65 an hour.

That is the case for hundreds of the apprentices taken on by the outgoing SNP

West Dunbartonshire council. It is the case with ALL the 600 apprentices taken on in recent years by the former Labour North Ayrshire council.

In both cases, the SSP is pounding the streets with the message ‘pay apprentices a living wage - end slave labour’. We have launched street petitions, aimed at the incoming councils. We are approaching council workers’ unions for joint efforts. We are targeting apprentices to get them directly involved in fighting back.

£9 justified

Since 1998 the SSP has championed a decent national minimum wage based on two-thirds average male earnings - a formula that is time-honoured in the trade union movement, having been widely accepted by union conferences as far back as the 1970s.

In today’s figures that would be at least £9-an-hour; not a king’s ransom, given galloping inflation on life’s necessities, but an income that would lift people’s chins above water.

We have consistently argued this should apply to all

workers and trainees over 16. This is in part to prevent the age-old employers’ tactic of dumping better-organised and better-paid older workers for hordes of more vulnerable young workers; but also in recognition that young workers do not get housing at one-third the rent of the rest of us, or a two-thirds discount on food and clothing.

Even though they would spurn the case for a £9 minimum, the Labour and SNP councils which are subjecting a new generation to £2.65 admit the bare minimum required for a ‘living wage’ is £7.20 an hour.

In North Ayrshire, hundreds of council apprentices on the £2.65 pittance are used to prop up ailing, declining services and depleted workforces, with little or no prospect of a permanent job at the end, as the council’s Orwellian-named ‘Agenda for Change’ hacks services and shed 600 jobs in

the past four years alone. The local UNISON branch has taken the admirable step of offering free membership to all apprentices, to help counter this exploitation.

In the May council elections, voters slaughtered the parties of vicious austerity - the Tory leaders of the Westminster cuts Coalition and their LibDem partners in crimes against jobs, pay and services.

Labour and the SNP - aided and abetted by the brutal, self-fulfilling media lie that the elections were a two-horse race - were the main beneficiaries of this mass rejection of Cameron's and Clegg's razor gangs. But within that pattern, another also prevailed: several councils changed hands in revenge against the party of local cuts.

In both Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire the ruling SNP were dumped for their axe-wielding and replaced by Labour majorities. In North Ayrshire, the Labour butchers were displaced by an SNP/Independent council.

Reverse the cuts

In all three cases the SSP is mounting a serious campaign demanding reversal of the cuts by their predecessors. People want genuine change, not an exercise in shuffling seats on the Titanic.

In Renfrewshire, we are putting the new Labour rulers on the spot by demanding they reverse closure of local swimming pools.

In West Dunbartonshire, with the SSP's councillor Jim Bolla at the heart of it, we are demanding Labour scrap the SNP's housing stock transfer of 5,000 council houses, at a time when over 6,000 local people languish on the waiting lists.

And both there and in North Ayrshire, we are spearheading this fight to reverse the cuts with the demand for a living wage for all apprentices.

Mass unemployment has been wielded as a weapon to suppress wage levels by successive governments. But low pay slashes spending power and adds to job losses.

The organised unions, alongside community and student organisations, need to wield their potential power to break this vicious circle. A good starting point is the fight for a Living Wage for all apprentices in newly elected councils.

Even the Westminster government has been forced into 34 different U-turns, even before any generalised struggle has been mounted. So how much more vulnerable to organised pressure could these councillors be?

Join the SSP's fight for a living wage for all - give youth a future!

Driving back the hatchet-men

WORKERS in the 15,000-strong Department for Transport (DfT) workforce are staging a series of short, sharp strikes, after a majority of over 2:1 in the ballot by their union, PCS.

The action embraces coastguards, driving examiners, vehicle inspectors, DVLA admin staff, Driving Standards Agency workers and many others.

The issues behind the action are varied across the department - an accumulation of grievances and opposition to concerted attacks by a government dogmatically tied to privatisation and brutally committed to cuts and closures, regardless of the human cost to workers and the public they serve.

Strikes

SSP national workplace organiser Richie Venton spoke to Willie Telfer, PCS union national assistant group secretary in the DfT about the issues behind the strikes.

"They plan to close nine Coastguard Centres, including those at Greenock and the Forth. This would mean no coastguard station anywhere on the coast between Holyhead in North Wales and Stornoway - with Belfast controlling the inshore waters of the Clyde and Clyde Estuary. Across the DfT as a whole, privatisation of shared services is at an advanced stage for admin, HR, payroll and procurement staff.

"They want to close all 39 DVLA local offices. Instead, they want inferior services online and through intermediaries. This threatened 1,200 jobs already, but now they

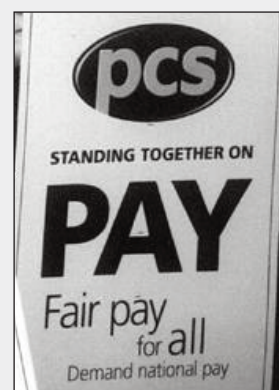
have also announced plans to shut the office in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, shedding all 350 jobs in what is the biggest employer in that small town.

"The Highways Agency is threatened with privatisation, via mutualisation. The Driving Standards Agency fears the loss of hundreds of jobs in the Newcastle call centre, with services to be shoved onto an online version.

"Driving examiners fear a collapse of standards with future privatisation. Government plans include closure of VOSA test centres, where they test HGV and PSV vehicles, including the one in Bishopbriggs.

"Workers across the DfT face our contracts, terms and conditions being ripped up, for example on annual leave, working hours and absence management policy.

"In the DfT in Whitehall there is no sick warning for the first 22 days off sick, but the DfT want to drag this down to the worst level, which is in the DVLA, where only the first 8 days of sick-



ness are exempt from triggering this disciplinary procedure.

"In the civil service, anyone seriously ill gets six months off sick on full pay,

and six months on half pay. But increasingly people are being dismissed after the first three or four months.

"In negotiations, we conceded that we would accept only twelve days before a sickness warning, provided extreme illnesses like cancer were excluded.

"But the DfT simply walked away from the negotiations and declared their intention of ripping up the staff handbook. I believe this is all designed to make the workforce cheaper for privatisation.

"The action against all these cuts and closures mostly consists of two-hour strikes at 3pm on Fridays - at least for the rest of June!

"This form of action has been brilliant, being very visual, and giving workers a sense of the power they have walking out, compared to the long lie-in for many of a day's strike.

Retreat

"And members have been encouraged by the government's back-tracking. Their original plan was to start office closures in July 2012 (next month) but now they have retreated to closures from November 2013 onwards, which would take the whole process close to the next general election, giving us extra leverage as a union. This has added to our hope of winning.

"So has the massive public support. We've collected 80,000 names on petitions, and of the 2,000 car dealers that we've interviewed, 90 per cent agree with the union."

FROM POLLOK TO THE PARLY

A night in the life of Rosie Kane

An Evening With Rosie Kane, Tron Theatre, Glasgow, 19 May. Directed by **Rachel Jury**

by *Sandra Webster*

WHEN telling their life story, most people might leave out that they had been dropped as a child. But in an entertaining and poignant one-woman show, Rosie Kane shared with her audience some of the personal scenes in her life which took a wee lass from Pollok to the Scottish Parliament as an MSP.

Rosie considers the special care she required and growing up in a musically talented family - "The Osmonds with fillings" - as some of the reasons she is the woman she is today.

Rosie held the audience in the palm of her hand as she told them some extraordinary things that have happened to her. Her performance was warm, poignant, and entertaining but was always filled with the wonder in the eyes of that little girl she has never left behind.

There was a vulnerability

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ROSIE KANE: grew up in a musically talented family - "The Osmonds with fillings"

and warmth in her performance which drew her audience in. Rosie admits to worry about why people might come to see her performance and if she would be heckled. On the night though there was no need for that as an audience which included some well known faces such as Janice Forsythe and Robert Carlyle listened to her wonderful stories.

Theatre and performance to her are direct action. She wants to bring theatre to new audiences and communities and inspire a future generation of young women like herself.

"My Idols were Lulu and Lena Zavaroni, I dreamed of escaping and travelling the world. I want to inspire others and let them know that theatre is for them too."

Rosie has been a campaigner in non-violent direct action and described her arrest at Faslane and doing a lock in at a Chamber Of Commerce. These were told with her humorous voices but

she is fearful we live in more dangerous times.

"As the country moves more and more towards the right, I don't think that I would have been so tolerated by the authorities. Things are becoming more dangerous for protesters today.

As a socialist, Rosie is using all the funds raised by her show to allow the show the anti-poverty musical Miss Smith to tour for two weeks in July. It will be travelling as far afield as Newcastle as well as the Central Belt of Scotland.

As the audience was one of the larger ones the Tron has seen for some time, Rosie's show raised more money than was expected.

The show ends with her sitting at the election and realising that she had been elected to Holyrood. The wee girl from Pollok would have to learn to parley with the parliamentarians.

As a socialist this is at odds with her thinking that no-one should have aspirations to

"climb the greasy pole". She was there to represent those without voices, which she did and still achieves magnificently.

The next plan for Rosie is to tour with Miss Smith then appear in a musical about the Roma. She then hopes her one woman show will tour around Scotland. She will use the money to fund other radical theatre projects where other people can realise that theatre is about them.

This is an amazing show which weaves together the threads of so many working people's experiences and deserves to go out there and be seen by many. All of us that were privileged to see her show know a rare, honest talent when we see one. Excellent direction by Rachel Jury brought life and movement to Rosie's visual memories. The performances by the Miss Smith cast made me want to stop the bus again. Perhaps the wee girl from Pollok's world tour was not just a dream.

Bravo to all involved.


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        return nil
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Cyber 'Flame' targets Iran

CYBER TERROR: "It's quite logical that there are new cyber weapons designed, and maybe already computers infected that we don't know about." - Eugene Kaspersky, founder of anti-virus software company Kaspersky Lab

Alongside the ever present threat of armed attack, Iran is also facing cyber attacks. **Jimmy Kerr** takes a look.

THE latest cyber-attack attack on Iran represents a frightening new theatre of warfare that has uncertain implications for all of us.

Security experts agree that this malicious code, dubbed 'Flame', is something revolutionary, designed to infiltrate and move between computers connected to Iran, stealing information from computers in a stunning variety of forms including using the target computer's microphones to bug rooms, taking screenshots, logging keystrokes, infiltrating communications software and recording network traffic and instant messaging conversations.

With 20mb of data, it dwarfs the two previous cyber-attacks on Iran by a factor of 20 and is larger than any other known malware designed for criminal purposes by a factor of 100.

Eugene Kaspersky, founder of digital security giant Kaspersky Lab says that it will

take years to analyse the code in full and figure out all of its functions. Once this analysis takes place and the functions of the code are known to the computer security community, there will be little to stop criminals and hacktivists modifying the code and using it to create a new level of malicious software, with vast implications for us all.

It was in 2010 that the Stuxnet virus damaged Iranian systems controlling nuclear enrichment centrifuges and last year a similar virus called Duku, caused havoc amongst Iran's oil terminal systems.

Although these codes were revolutionary and will themselves come back in mutated forms to haunt computer users everywhere, they were designed for just one purpose, to disrupt systems.

This new code is more of a tool kit equipped for spying but the size of the code and its vast complexity suggest that it is also likely to be involved in some kind of disruption in the future.

At the time of writing, 189 infections were confirmed in Iran, 98 in the West Bank, with a smaller number across the

Middle East and North Africa. Kaspersky Lab, one of three companies to identify the malware, concluded "the geography of the targets and also the complexity of the threat leaves no doubt about it being a nation-state that sponsored the research that went into it".

Most fingers of suspicion have pointed to Israel - accusations that gained credence when Prime Minister Moshe Yaalon appeared to hint that Israel might have been responsible saying that "whoever sees Iran as a threat is behind these attacks".

Although the code has been active for many months - possibly as much as five years according to some experts - the timing of its discovery could have serious effects on talks about Iran's nuclear enrichment programme.

Iran has been in talks with permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany to try and resolve a growing crisis around its nuclear capability, with the Islamic Republic refusing to abandon its enrichment programme, which it says is for medical, energy and research purposes,

all rights under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but against several UN Security Council resolutions.

The talks have been seen by some as an attempt at heading off an EU ban on shipping insurance that comes into force on 1 July, which was designed to pressurise the Iranians into stopping fuel enrichment but will almost certainly have the opposite effect, and may even disrupt global oil markets.

Other sanctions on Iran, ostensibly aimed at pressurising the country into stopping its enrichment programme, have also had the predictable effect of pushing the Supreme Council into the position of what some analysts like David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security call "nuclear hedging", a similar policy in its effects to Israel's own policy of "opacity".

Fearful of Iran being pushed into making a "dash to nuclear capability", the think tank has called for an end to these forms electronic warfare.

In terms of potential "blowback", it may already be too late.

EGYPT'S REVOLUTION SIDELINED AS PRESIDENTIAL RUN OFF LOOMS

by Bill Bonnar

THE run-off Egyptian presidential elections have filled many in Egypt and abroad with dismay.

A revolution which overthrew the Mubarak dictatorship and was fuelled by demands for democracy, women's rights and progressive social and economic reforms have produced a contest between two candidates who represent none of these demands.

For many there is a sense that they have been cheated by a regime which deliberately promoted violence and insecurity and manipulated the political process in order to frighten many Egyptians into voting for a modified version of that old regime. A Mubarak dictatorship without Mubarak.

Suspicion

There is also a suspicion that the regime deliberately promoted the Muslim Brotherhood as the main opposition because it was seen as most likely to do deals and protect the established order.

Leading the first round election (with 25 per cent of the vote) was the Muslim Brotherhood candidate; Mohamed Morsii. Although the Brotherhood have endeavoured to shake off their reactionary image and present themselves as a modern, forward thinking party, the possibility that they may win the Presidency will seriously worry progressive opinion in the country.

This is particularly true of women, secularists and Egypt's large Christian community who fear the Brotherhood's claim that they do not want to create an Islamic state and that women's rights and



THE WRITING'S ON THE WALL: an artist paints 'I will never give you peace' next to a mural of Hosni Mubarak and the presidential candidates

those of religious minorities will be protected is essentially tactical in nature and that once in power the story will prove very different.

The Brotherhood often appeared quite radical in its condemnation of corruption and its tougher line on Israel yet it clearly links Egypt's problems with the secular path the country has taken since independence and clearly seeks to take Egypt down a different road.

A close runner up (with 24 per cent) in the first round elections was Ahmed Shafek; the Prime Minister under Mubarak.

He was very much the candidate of the old regime with the clear remit of preserving as much of that regime as possible. Supported by the United States and Israel he ran on an overtly law and order ticket promising stability and security in a country in turmoil since the revolution.

For Shafek the revolution began and ended with the removal of his life long friend and colleague Mubarak and wants to re-establish as much of the

old regime as possible in the new circumstances that the find themselves in.

This means continuing the leading role of the armed forces, preserving the wealth and privileges of Egypt's ruling class and maintaining close strategic ties with Israel and the United States.

The fact that both candidates between them polled less than 50 per cent of the vote will not be lost on most Egyptians.

Neither are supported by any progressive opinion in the country nor should they be mistakenly supported by the Left internationally. They may have emerged from the revolutionary process which overthrew the Mubarak dictatorship but share a common aim of crushing that same revolution.

Crisis

Whoever emerges victorious will still have to face a country in deep economic and social crisis, marred by conflict and facing the same demands which brought thousands of ordinary Egyptians onto the

streets. The establishment of democracy and civil rights, the defence of secularism, the promotion of women's rights and a range of social and economic policies aimed at tackling poverty and inequality.

These are the demands of millions of Egyptians yet worryingly they were not reflected in the elections.

The failure of the Left to produce a viable alternative is the most worrying factor of all.

The main Left candidate; Abu Al-Izz A Hariri of the Socialist Popular Alliance Party pulled less than 1 per cent of the vote. Creating a national movement of the Left which reflects the significant Left opinion in the country is now a matter of urgency.

When the next President is sworn into office he will confidently announce that the revolution is over.

This will put him on a collision course with the large numbers of Egyptians for whom this is very much not the case. That conflict and not this election result will settle this question.

Spanish mining jobs in bankers' cross hairs

by Ken Ferguson

IN a battle with many echoes of the epic, year-long UK miners' strike a quarter a century ago, Spanish colliers are in action to defend their jobs, pits and the future of their communities.

Their dispute centres on plans by Spain's right wing government implementing the austerity plans of the EU and slashing subsidies to the mining industry. Coal subsidies this year are €111million, down from €301million last year.

Spanish coal communities receive aid nationally and from the EU in order to compete with coal from abroad and to re-train people when mines are closed.

Towing the dominant EU austerity for the workers/cream for the bankers line, the Spanish government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy says it is adamant to enforce the 64 per cent subsidy reduction in order to reduce the public deficit, even as it forks out fresh billions with a new mega bailout of Spanish banks.

The miners battle involves some 8,000 colliers from 40 mines, mainly in Northern Spain. So far it has seen roads blocked, and miners on stay-



PROTEST: five miners were arrested on 4 June when roads were blocked in protest against cuts to government subsidies

down strikes at pits. Both major union federations - Unión General de Trabajadores and Comisiones Obreras - back the strikes in defence of the subsidies seen by many as the life blood of mining communities.

Talks with employers and the government, held on 29 May, proved fruitless. The unions had hoped to win a softening of the proposed cuts package but the employers and government remained unyielding.

The mineworkers' unions announced the resumption of strikes in and around the cities of Aragon, Asturias, and Castilla y León, and a major demonstration planned in Madrid.

Before the talks took place, industrial action that started 23-24 May was solid and miners also blocked major road arteries linking northern cities, and ten miners began sit-ins after their shifts ended at the Candín mine in Oviedo. This action was spontaneous and not authorised by the unions, but the protests showed the deep frustration felt by Spanish miners to the proposed subsidy cuts.

On 31 May, miners took to the streets of Madrid. The unions said 10,000 mainly from northern Spain travelled by bus to the Spanish capital.

Clashes broke out between protesters and police. Police fired rubber bullets and protesting min-

ers threw firecrackers. There were two arrests and twelve wounded, including two journalists and eight policemen.

The Socialists have called for the head of the national police Ignacio Cosidó to explain to parliament the 'brutal police charge' against the protesting miners and United Left and its allies in the Plural Left parliamentary group have demanded that the interior minister, Jorge Fernandez Diaz, explain the police actions to MPs.

Adrian Marmeleiro, said: "If we don't get what is being asked for, we will all end up on the street. If we all end up on the street, there will be no-one left (living) in mining communities. Because everyone will leave to look for work elsewhere. It will be a disaster for the region."

For their part, miners and their unions feel such a drastic cut-back will be the death knell to coal-mining in Spain, a country that has shed 40,000 jobs in the sector over the past 20 years due to pit closures.

Just as in Britain 25 years ago, the battle is joined with the choice between job and communities on one hand, or the wallets of the fat cats on the other.

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INDEPENDENCE CAMPAIGN GETS OFF TO GLITZY START

by Sandra Webster

I was privileged to be part of the audience of the Yes Campaign launch just over a week ago. The SNP had been very keen to keep its format under wraps so it would be a shared experience for the audience and the press. So a large crowd - which included an SSP contingency - arrived at a cinema complex near Haymarket.

I wondered, was this intentional? Was the launch going to have the impact of a Hollywood blockbuster? I personally hoped it would be more in the genre of a British indie movie with real substance in its plot. This would be more in line with the aims of the YES campaign to achieve independence in my lifetime.

Another comrade (Bill) and I managed to get one of the last remaining seats right at the very back row. From there we could look down at the audience all looking excited and like us excited to be there.

Lots of presenters and technique types were busying themselves around. I sat back wishing I had some popcorn and waited for the show to begin. We had been promised a list of prominent 100 Scots who would sign the petition at the side of the stage. I wondered who they might be.

The show opened with a visual montage of excited faces and glimpses of lots of ordinary Scots from all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds, with disabilities. I was reassured by this and glad that the campaign was going to be an inclusive one where most people could be included. A promising start and without any



HISTORY IN THE MAKING: but middle-aged men dominated proceedings at the Yes launch

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

mention of *Flower Of Scotland*.

The action kicked off with the Big Country song *One Great Thing*, A song I personally used to like but think am going to go off. Especially by it's overuse during the day.

Alex Salmond and Patrick Harvie kicked the proceedings off with nice soundbites. This was a launch that was not getting into any specifics about what the landscape of an Independent Scotland would look like, but one that would rally all the supporters of Independence to get together to make the referendum a success.

We would leave all the fine details till later. However, Alex Salmond did mention the end of Trident in Scotland as a priority and the aim to make Scotland nuclear free. The other speakers were passionate and were made

up of many well kent faces from all areas of public life. From the political sphere Tommy Brennan and Dennis Canavan were impressive. Surprisingly Sean Connery did not make it there but instead sent a message.

It was good to see people from the arts there such as Liz Lohead who do pay their taxes in this country. Alan Cumming the actor tweeted that he was going to move to Scotland so he could vote in the Independent Referendum. Final speaker Brian Cox - a life long Labour supporter - stole the show for me when he described himself as a republican socialist.

The speakers were good but what struck me was how the majority of the great and good were mainly middle-aged men. There were very few young people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and women.

This was even the case among the prominent 100 who came onto the stage at the end, which included Colin our co-spokesperson. The business community, who must be among the biggest backers of the campaign, were only included in a video, which again included Colin.

I said to a friend later that I knew I had been part of history. If in my lifetime I can see an Independent, nuclear-free Scotland, I will feel that we have managed to achieve something.

The campaign launch was glitzy, entertaining and great for the press.

But I feel it let down many people by not being as inclusive as it could have been, representative of the many different groups that make up Scotland. I hope that the campaign will widen out as it grows.