

# THE CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST SCOTLAND



by Colin Fox

**Scottish  
Socialist  
Party**



# **THE CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST SCOTLAND**



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# ★ CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

**ON THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2014, SCOTLAND WILL GO TO THE POLLS** to decide whether to remain part of the 300 year old political union that is 'The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' or become the world's newest independent country. The decision will have far reaching consequences either way.

For the British state, Scottish independence represents a huge threat, a profound loss of economic and political power and influence at home and abroad. Consequently, it is dead-set against it and it will do its utmost to stop that from happening. For the independence movement, the stakes are equally high. The referendum offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to secure self-determination for Scotland, to establish a left of centre social democratic state and free five million Scots from the yoke of British imperialism.

The last time Scotland debated independence with this much intensity and passion was back in the late 1970s when Harold Wilson's minority Labour Government conceded a referendum on devolution in return for the support of 13 SNP MPs at Westminster. Although a majority of Scots supported devolution, the 'prize' was withheld because the Yes vote fell below 40 per cent of the total electorate and a clause had been introduced to the Bill stipulating the number of votes for had to exceed that level. Those who did not vote were effectively and infamously added to the No side.

Whilst there is no such 40 per cent rule in 2014's referendum, the debate itself has changed little. Back in 1979, the 'Scotland is British' campaigners argued that Scotland was too small and too poor to run its own affairs given the challenges posed in 'an unpredictable and dangerous world'. Despite having witnessed many small nations emerge and secure their own independence over the past 34 years, Alistair Darling, the former Labour Chancellor presiding over the No campaign, Better Together, still maintains Scotland is too small and therefore incapable of running its own affairs.

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The international landscape has changed beyond all recognition over the past four decades. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, for example, led to the emergence of dozens of new nations, many now members of the EU. Opponents of independence appear to ignore the fact that not one of these newly independent countries has expressed a desire to return to the old pre-independence arrangements. This fact would appear to comprehensively defeat the argument that small countries somehow cannot survive on their own.

There are now 300 countries in the world recognised by the United Nations, many of which emerged since the 1979 devolution referendum and are about the same size as Scotland. Norway, a country of only 3.5 million people, and very similar to Scotland in many ways, sits atop the UN's Development Index as the country with the highest per capita GDP in the world. Most nations of the world have a GDP well below that of Scotland so the absolutist case against independence has also been undermined. Moreover, most countries don't have the vast oil reserves that Scotland has either, which are expected to last another 40 years.

The 1997 referendum on a Scottish Parliament also resulted in Yes votes (one for a new parliament and the other agreeing that it should have tax varying powers) as Scots resolved never again to allow themselves to be governed by those we did not support and who had no democratic mandate to rule over us! It is a rich irony that the Scottish Parliament itself is now a permanent reminder of Margaret Thatcher's legacy, another Scottish decision she vehemently opposed.

But Labour's concession of a devolved parliament did not herald some conversion to the cause of independence – rather it was the least Tony Blair felt he could get away with to maintain his Scottish MPs. His 'power devolved is power retained' strategy was designed to severely limit the powers of the Holyrood parliament. Fifteen years later, those powers are deemed to be insufficient, so clearly limited that most Scots want them greatly enhanced. Those who support this 'Devo Max' option of extending the powers of the Holyrood parliament, must decide whether to vote for the status quo or for independence in the 2014 referendum.

The essence of the 2014 independence referendum therefore is that whilst all agree that Scots have the right to make our own decisions, the choice is do we wish to remain at the mercy of governments we neither elected nor support and leave the 300 year old UK behind or go for full independence? Few would disagree that regardless of how the vote goes in 2014, further powers will be

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devolved to Holyrood. The issue however is, will they be the full powers needed as independence supporters insist or mere stop gaps as devolution advances further?

For the Scottish Socialist Party, the choice is clear. Founded in 1998, the SSP has supported independence since our inception. We campaign for an independent socialist Scotland, a modern democratic republic. We have been at the forefront of this debate for 15 years. We helped establish the cross-party 'Scottish Independence Convention' in 2005 and the Yes Scotland coalition in 2012. Having championed independence these past 15 years the SSP is proud to be the left's standard-bearer in this debate. We have a seat on the Yes Scotland Advisory Board in recognition of the important role we have played in advocating independence and in the constructive contribution we continue to make to the independence movement today.

The Scottish Socialist Party won six seats in the Holyrood elections of 2003. In doing so we received the highest number of votes any socialist party has secured since the 1930s. We recruited 3,000 members across Scotland and built a party with 80 branches and an uncompromising anti-capitalist programme, which was

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and remains wholeheartedly pro-independence. For the SSP, there is no contradiction between supporting independence at home and supporting internationalism throughout the world. They are for us one and the same struggle. This is an issue we will return to more fully in this pamphlet.

It is of course now a matter of public record that an idiotic (and indeed criminal) decision taken by our former National Convenor, Tommy Sheridan MSP, to sue a tabloid newspaper over stories he knew to be true – and perjure himself repeatedly in court, against the advice of SSP members – set our ground breaking project back considerably. And whilst I have no intention here of retracing the details of that appalling episode again, I nonetheless restate here the SSP's conviction that we were right to confront him and deny him his wish to put 3,000 other people in jail by also perjuring themselves. The history books show the SSP survived his shameful attempts to destroy us. We have remained at the forefront of the socialist struggle throughout the past 15 years and will continue to do so.

This pamphlet is written for SSP activists to take our proud record and case for independence to the people of Scotland, via the Yes Scotland movement and the Radical Independence Campaign. Our case is that we believe working class people in Scotland can be economically, socially, culturally and politically better off with independence. We believe the UK holds Scotland back and insist the break-up of the British state is not only ongoing but it is a thoroughly progressive development for the peoples of these islands and the rest of the world. We see independence as a democratic step towards a Scotland that is fairer, that has ended exploitation and is at peace both with itself, its neighbours and with the rest of the world – in other words an independent socialist Scotland. Moreover we believe the 2014 referendum is there to be won, and we fully intend to play our part in delivering a resounding Yes vote next year.

Finally, I'd like to thank John Finnie MSP, Lorna Bett and John Gallagher for their help in bringing this pamphlet to fruition.

## ★ CHAPTER TWO

# THE CONTEXT OF THE 2014 INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM DEBATE

*“There is simply no challenge we face today where breaking up Britain is the right answer. None of the key challenges of globalisation, terrorist threats or an ageing population require independence as their solution. The future I see for Scotland is part of a dynamic, enterprising, prosperous and compassionate Britain.”*

**David Cameron,**

**UK Prime Minister, Scottish Tory Party conference, Stirling, 7 June 2013**

**THIS QUOTE FROM DAVID CAMERON SUMS UP THE ESSENCE OF THE** unionist case for Scotland remaining within the UK. It contains traces of both absolutism and anxiety at the prospect of Scotland leaving the UK. And it is no accident he chooses the economy, national security and global politics as the ‘key challenges’ facing Britain today. Yet his words ring hollow. They are full of the usual promises of ‘dynamism, enterprise, prosperity and compassion’ that will jar with many Scots facing the worst economic recession in 80 years and witnessing a fall in their living standards unprecedented in modern times. Millions of people across Britain are now either ‘under-employed’ or without work altogether. So much for economic ‘dynamism’, ‘enterprise’ and ‘prosperity’!

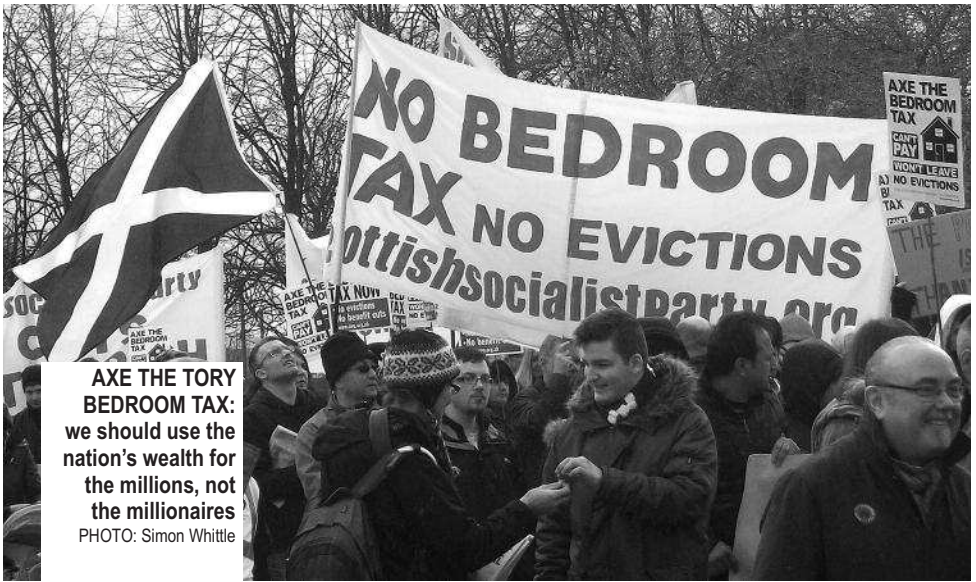
Of course there are those who have ‘never had it so good’. Those multinational corporations raking in billions in profits are ‘enterprising’ enough to pay little or no taxes here whilst insisting they are ‘acting within the law’. This parasitical corporate elite, based in the City of London, who own and control so much of the UK economy and its political classes were responsible for the recession and yet now insist the government holds others to account for it. They demand cuts to welfare spending and public services to the most vulnerable through measures such as the hated Bedroom Tax, which reduces housing benefit paid to tenants by up to



£35 per week. David Cameron is following the instructions given to him by neo-liberal corporate Britain. This 'compassion' is also forcing 50,000 families a week to rely on charities for their daily bread, not the government on whom they should rightly be able to depend. And perhaps nothing better illustrates the gulf that exists in political thinking between London and Scotland than the tenor of the attacks on welfare recipients. Leave aside for the moment that Labour and the Liberal Democrats go along with them entirely. The sight of the Tory Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith lecturing people on how they can survive on £53 per week when he receives almost £53 per hour is simply nauseating. The financial saving from the so called 'cap' on benefits is virtually negligible – as The Herald editorial (15/7/13) pointed out – it would save just 0.01 per cent of the total welfare budget - and yet it is presented as a financial necessity. The truth is it is politically motivated and designed to drive a further wedge between the employed poor and the unemployed poor. The vicious cynicism behind it is odious to most decent people and yet Iain Duncan Smith doesn't care because he is advised it is popular in the South of England. This again illustrates the stark difference in political outlook between there and north of the border where such policies are anathema.

These measures illustrate why the UK is now the fourth most unequal society in the developed world. In David Cameron's Britain, one in five children grow up in poverty – one in three in Glasgow. One third of all households now suffer the indignity of fuel poverty. Yet the richest tenth of households are now 273 times better off than the poorest tenth! Like all UK governments before him, Cameron's policies are specifically designed to make the working class majority pay for an economic and political crisis caused by the bankers and the rich. And all this is relevant to the independence debate because the Tories like to suggest, as David Cameron did in his speech at the Scottish Tory Conference, that Britain is a country whose subjects all enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world and is a force for fairness and progress. Nothing could be further from the truth. The wealth is there certainly but it is neither shared out fairly nor is its acquisition morally defensible. The fact is Scotland's working class majority does not receive its share of the wealth it generates. It is held back economically, socially, culturally and politically by UK rule.

The Conservative Party in Scotland remains wedded to the UK. And yet it is a party in terminal decline. In a noted intervention, Murdo Fraser MSP, a candidate in last year's Scottish Tory leadership contest, summed up their dilemma when he conceded they were a 'toxic brand' in Scotland, seen as a party of the rich and the



south of England. He dramatically suggested they drop the Conservative name altogether. The party of the Poll Tax were against devolution, against the Scottish Parliament and even the limited powers it currently has. As a measure of their ambitions, they celebrated the election of their lone Tory MP north of the border like they had won the National Lottery! And spare a thought for their Coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats. They have fared even worse than the Tories in recent years in Scotland, famously being beaten by a man dressed as a penguin in an Edinburgh council seat they had previously held! They have achieved that which no one in Scotland would have thought possible, they have become even more hated than the Tories! And their long period in purdah shows no sign of ending, such is the ongoing disgust the electorate feels towards them for having gone into coalition with the Tories at Westminster and compounding their treachery by voting for tuition top up fees, the Bedroom Tax, welfare attacks and a host of other 'crimes'.

But of course it is not the Tories or Lib Dems who must save the union in Scotland – it is the Scottish Labour Party. Having backed devolution in the 1970s and 1990s, Labour vociferously opposes independence, arguing that Scotland is 'better off within the UK'. They want more powers for the Scottish Parliament but have as yet failed to outline what powers these might be. For 'Red Ed' Miliband "Poverty [in Scotland] can only be defeated by utilising the resources of the UK as

a whole". But don't hold your breath. Labour leaders have been promising to eradicate poverty for 100 years but when elected they prefer to manage the system responsible for creating the poverty and therefore perpetuate it.

Today's Labour Party is a thoroughly neo-liberal, warmongering machine that holds working class people in thrall to big business. They support 90 per cent of the Coalition cuts to public services. They have refused to rescind the hated Bedroom Tax if re-elected. They support their disgraceful attacks on claimants and the vulnerable too. It was they who privatised our schools, hospitals, prisons and roads using Thatcher's highly discredited Private Finance Initiatives. It was they who, to their eternal shame, took us to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was they who ordered a second generation of nuclear weapons for the Clyde.

Keir Hardie would be spinning in his grave. Yet Scottish Labour is absolutely crucial to the unionist cause. Without their support, the Better Together coalition of Tories and Lib Dems would fall apart.

Together, all three insist 'we will be more prosperous, more capable of addressing Scotland's economic, social, cultural and political problems by remaining part of the United Kingdom'. It is an argument that suggests Scotland's appalling economic and social ills will somehow disappear if we do nothing and remain part of a political union that steadfastly ignores our wishes.

The SNP by contrast have been riding the crest of a wave politically in Scotland for the past six years. They won the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary elections and formed their first government north of the border. After abolishing NHS prescription charges, defending Scotland from tuition fees and ensuring elderly care charges introduced in England did not find their way north, they won again in 2011, this time with an overall majority – one which the D'Hondt system of PR was supposed to prevent. The SNP victory meant a referendum on independence became inevitable. They support independence and have done for 80 years, and today provide the vast bulk of the Yes Scotland campaign resources and activists.

Like the SNP, the Scottish Green Party favours independence, seeing it as a logical extension of their 'power is better when it is localised' philosophy.

For our part, the Scottish Socialist Party believes Scotland's working class majority can be economically, socially, culturally and politically better off with independence. We believe Scots should be able to make our own choices, free from the chains of the neo-liberal, warmongering British state. And those choices can lead to a fairer, more equitable, prosperous, peace loving, environmentally

sustainable, progressive democratic country. Scotland today is of course a capitalist country in the grip of neo-liberalism like so many others. But as far as the Scottish Socialist Party is concerned, the struggle for socialism can be significantly advanced through independence and we will again make that case in this pamphlet.

The UK exercises a malevolent influence on the Scottish working class – on our economic conditions, social well-being, political rights and cultural needs. Politics in Scotland is completely different from the other nations of the UK. Electoral politics are largely a battle between Labour and the SNP. South of the border, it's between the Tories and Labour. In other words, whilst Ed Miliband faces an opponent from his right, in Scotland his counterpart Johann Lamont faces an SNP foe coming at her from her left, admittedly not a difficult task.

Scotland is at a crossroads after 14 years of a devolved Scottish Parliament. The overwhelming majority feel its powers are inadequate and need to be greatly augmented. And they are right. In my four years at Holyrood, I recall repeatedly being told we could not talk about youth unemployment, trade union rights, wage rates or international issues such as the war in Iraq, or Britain's occupation of Afghanistan, or the nuclear weapons based on the Clyde. These matters were 'reserved' to Westminster. It was a daily reminder that we had a parliament without the powers needed to address the issues our constituents demanded of us. Now, most Scots want more powers for Holyrood.

Scotland is now in the midst of the worst economic recession in 80 years with many people struggling to make ends meet and facing this scale of economic downturn for the first time. The mainstream parties are determined to make working class people pay for the economic collapse through substantial cuts in their living standards and quality of life.

This recession was utterly predictable, if a long time coming. Socialists saw it as an inevitable consequence of disastrous policies pursued throughout the capitalist world. In the USA, the government and the banks had been expanding credit to levels that were not just foolish they were reckless. In the initial phase the consequence of extending credit was to precipitate a short lived spending boom. The more the economy boomed, the more credit was loaned. This scheme fooled many so-called 'wise men' including Gordon Brown the Labour Chancellor who, like King Canute, foolishly claimed he could hold back the tide and boasted he had ended the organic 'boom bust cycle of capitalism'.



**INDEPENDENT WOMEN:**

Scottish women and mums are worst off with welfare changes imposed by Westminster. Scottish independence will create opportunities for women to engage in a proper democratic process

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

And when the loans inevitably fell due for repayment and no one had the money, the 2007-8 financial collapse destroyed any shred of credibility Brown, Bush, Bernanke, Berlusconi and all the rest had left. Britain was forced to bail out its entire banking system with unprecedented amounts of public funds. The banks and financiers who caused the crisis walked away scot-free but millions of people across Britain were to pay a high price.

Many Scots have seen their living standard deteriorate since 2008 as a catastrophic system failure affected millions of people across the capitalist world – US, Spain, Ireland, Iceland, Greece, Spain, Italy and elsewhere all suffering as a

consequence of this latest capitalist failure. Under-employment and unemployment are now widespread, as are food banks and the explosion of high street moneylenders like Wonga, Cash Converters and Cash-a-Cheque. And most economists, though they differ on what should be done about the current crisis, are agreed that its consequences will be felt for the rest of this decade! So the independence debate must reflect this reality. The conflict between neo-liberalism and the interests of the working class majority is sharpening.

What then are the features of neo-liberal economics? Perhaps the first thing to say about the neo-liberal economic dominance today is that it is neither 'new' nor 'liberal'. The rules set down by the International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation and the World Bank involve 'opening up' markets to so called 'free competition' which in effect means allowing multinational monopolies to dominate world trade. These corporations are given inducements such as promises of a low waged and compliant (i.e. non-union) workforce and low corporate taxes.

You can see why small businesses are so hostile to this neo-liberal dominance of multi-nationals who in effect drive them out of business and take their market share using economies of scale and short term loss leading or cross subsidy.

Moreover, neo-liberal rules insist governments sell off public enterprises to private corporations. They also mean that the rights and living standards of the vast majority are increasingly traduced. So whilst most people are suffering, a rich corporate elite have never had it so good. We face a cut in hours at work, redundancy and joblessness on the one hand and higher bills for basic necessities on the other. Many people in Scotland are experiencing a marked fall in their standard of living for the first time. This fact needs to be put at the centre of this debate. For the SSP, independence offers working class people in Scotland the opportunity to 'dodge the bullet' that this recession represents.

One feature of this recession not seen before is the substantial growth in 'under-employment' where people have had to settle for part time, casual, temporary contracts when they would much prefer a full time, permanent and secure job. This is the primary reason why the unemployment figures have not risen and mask the severity of this recession. On top of this is the impact of the worst cuts in public expenditure ever seen. The collapse in the economy and the impact on the labour market has been severe with pay and conditions under widespread attack. Young people face a particularly bleak outlook as the jobs market collapses, and not just in Scotland. 'The unemployment rate across the

eurozone hit an all time high of 11.8 per cent, official figures have shown today' announced the BBC in early January. [Source: BBC News website 8/1/13].

There are now 680,000 working poor in Scotland – in other words more than half a million people classified as poor are in work. Meanwhile, the richest 100 Scots increased their net wealth by £21billion in 2012. They have a higher combined annual income than the Scottish Government, who must provide services to 5.3 million people. And yet all four mainstream parties advocate this neo-liberalism. Labour, for example, have ideologically abandoned social democracy and socialism altogether to accommodate this neo-liberal philosophy 'hook, line and sinker'. The SNP are also in its grip. It is left therefore to parties like the SSP to fight for the fundamental rights of working class people.

These issues with all their implications are the back cloth to the independence debate. For the Scottish Socialist Party, these questions will play a decisive part in determining how people vote in the referendum. The great socialist philosopher and activist Karl Marx wisely noted that "out of conflict comes clarity", and in examining the case our opponents make against independence, we must clarify the choices that voters face in 2014. The case against independence we will examine in chapter four – first we make the case for self-determination for Scotland.

## ★ CHAPTER THREE

# THE CASE FOR INDEPENDENCE

**FOR SOCIALISTS THE KEY QUESTION IS, WILL SCOTLAND'S WORKING CLASS** majority be better off with independence or not? Will we be better able to defeat the forces of neo-liberalism at the heart of Scottish society? In this chapter we look at these questions in detail. All the statistics used are taken from public records and in particular the Scottish Government's most recent paper on 'Scotland's Economy' (May 2013). Most Scots are asking 'will my family and I be better off with independence?' And to aid this important debate, the Scottish Government has issued a paper explaining where Scotland's wealth comes from. It is a paper everyone ought to read.

Scotland's tax revenues in 2011-12 were £56.9billion. The entire assets of our country are clearly much greater but if we look at taxes for the moment we see Scotland generated 9.8 per cent of the UK's tax receipts with only 8.4 per cent of its population. And of course these bare figures obscure the fact that the burden of tax falls disproportionately on the working class and the poor. The Council Tax, VAT, fuel duties and those taxes on food, drink and tobacco are all regressive, in other words, the poor pay a far larger share of their income than the well off. The same disadvantage exists in our Income Tax regime and it is a matter of widespread public outrage that the super-rich pay virtually no taxes at all. So much for us "all being in this [recession] together"!

Scotland's trade with the UK was £45.5billion last year. Our exports to destinations beyond the UK (excluding oil and gas) were £23.9billion. Looking at the Scottish Government's paper on the Scottish economy, one is struck by the diversity of industries and services operating in Scotland. Scotland would be the eighth richest country in the world measured by GDP per capita.

Discovered in the 1960s, the North Sea oil industry provided the UK treasury with £26billion in tax revenues last year. This industry continues to boom with



record levels of investment suggesting most oil companies expect another 30 years of profitable oil production ahead. Some 90 per cent of UK oil and gas fields are in the Scottish sector. Reserves are estimated at 24 billion barrels of oil, worth up to £1.5trillion at today's prices.

Unlike all the other parties, the Scottish Socialist Party supports returning the North Sea oil and gas industry to public ownership. We favour Norway's example where the industry has remained in public ownership since the 1960s. It has set aside £450billion in an oil fund for public use and this is now worth more than £90,000 per person. Norway has continually topped the UN index for countries with the highest standard of living in the world as a consequence of this far sighted and progressive decision. Scotland is also Europe's fifth biggest financial centre, with Edinburgh and Glasgow producing huge profits for banks and insurance firms as a result. The financial services industry is hugely important in the world today and Scotland's expertise remains highly prized.

The same envious glances are directed at our burgeoning renewables sector. This is a hugely important development given the global impact of burning fossil fuels for industry, power generations and transport. The vast potential in our wind, wave and water sector has led to Scotland being termed the 'Saudi Arabia of the renewables industry' with 25 per cent of Europe's resources found here. Scotland already generates more than one third of our electricity needs from renewables. We have 25 per cent of Europe's offshore wind potential and 10 per cent of Europe's wave power potential. This is again a sector the SSP insists should be brought into public ownership to ensure the economic benefits are enjoyed by every citizen.

Manufacturing as a whole in Scotland generates £14.7billion in exports annually. And the construction industry is worth a further £21billion. The food and drink industry is also an important economic asset that generates more than £12billion of turnover. Our whisky industry alone exports £4.2billion worth of drink – representing 23 per cent of the UK's entire food and drinks exports. Scotland's fishing fleet also lands 60 per cent of UK's fish and we are the world's third largest salmon producer. Scotland also has one quarter of the UK's beef herd. Agricultural output here is more than £2.7billion a year. More than 47,000 people are employed in the information technology industry in Scotland, with the sector producing a turnover in excess of £3.6billion annually. More than 200,000 Scots are employed in the tourism industry, worth £5billion annually. Life sciences employ

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**RADICAL INDEPENDENCE:** Scotland should be a people's democracy, a society of equality, a great welfare state, a good neighbour, and it should pioneer a just economy  
PHOTO: Craig Maclean

32,500 Scots with an annual turnover of £2.9billion. Our creative industries – art, film, music, festivals, museums and galleries, fashion, gaming, literature, etc – has a turnover of £4.8billion.

All in all, these figures paint a picture of a Scottish economy that is diverse and not dependent on any particular sector, be that oil, financial services, whisky or manufacturing. And yet the key point is re-iterated by Nobel Laureate Professor Joseph Stiglitz, who concluded that “without access to the relevant policy levers – particularly taxation and welfare policy – there is little that a Scottish Government can do to address” rising inequalities. Independence offers Scotland those fiscal and monetary levers to control and direct our own economy.

Yet for all our wealth, created by the people, it is stolen from us and distributed in unimaginable quantities to a tiny elite who own and control our banking and corporate sectors. This shows how ill-divided and socially corrupt Britain has become. Breaking free of the malevolent influence of the British state means that Scotland's social democratic values will be unchained. That then is what the independence debate is essentially all about. It's about ending low pay and

under-employment and providing full employment, it's about ending fuel poverty, it's about eradicating child poverty, improving our infrastructure, health care, social care, education, opportunity. Independence is the key to the door.

Will independence be a meaningful improvement in the way things are or just a miniature version of the UK with the Queen remaining Head of State, the pound remaining the currency, the new country also being a member of NATO? Will we see real economic democracy and social progress or will the banks and big corporations maintain their iron grip over our economy and society?

Such reservations are regularly heard in his debate and throw up the stark contrasts between the various visions of independence advocated by, say, the SSP and the SNP. Kevin Williamson of Bella Caledonia and the Scottish Independence Convention is among those apt to point out, legitimately, that such issues will ultimately be determined after the referendum as part of the elections to the new Scottish Parliament in 2016. Yet this is not sufficient because it tends to duck the detail voters want to have before they make up their minds about independence itself. Indeed, without detailed answers, we risk losing the very referendum victory we seek. George Kerevan of *The Scotsman* makes the same point (*The Scotsman* 26/7/13) that specific promises have to be made about the independence option if voters are to be inspired and won to our side.

His party, the SNP, offer a right wing economic programme and soft left social policies. An independent Scotland under their direction will not challenge capital. It will be neo-liberal and inevitably succumb to pressures from capitalism to stay in line, balance the books and keep the aspirations of the masses in check. Indeed, the debate so far on the currency that an independent Scotland should issue has shown this and contrasted their approach with the SSP's. There are essentially four options in that debate; either we keep the pound, join the euro, stay within a sterling zone as it were (made up of Scotland and the rest of the UK), or introduce our own currency. The socialist option would be to maximise the powers available to a sovereign Scotland. The SSP sees Scotland adopting its own currency protected against international speculation by limiting its convertibility into other currencies, controlling interest rates and inflationary pressures. However, in the market-driven capitalist world of today, such an option is not immediately open to us given Scotland's financial obligations to international bodies. So, it is sensible to look at those alternatives that would not limit Scotland's economic options.

In theory, it should be possible to keep the pound sterling, with all the constraints that would involve, such as the Bank of England maintaining monetary control (with the Westminster government's involvement). This is the SNP's preferred option, i.e. keeping Scotland within a sterling zone. And despite No campaign assertions to the contrary, it is inconceivable that Westminster and the Bank of England would refuse this arrangement. But it would mean that Scottish monetary policy would be dependent on their whims. And this is precisely why such a policy should be unacceptable. After all, how independent would Scotland be if our monetary policy were determined by London? There would be no independent interest rate and money supply (a key determinant of economic policy) would continue to be controlled by the Bank of England. It has been claimed that at least fiscal policy would be under the control of the Scottish Government, but budgetary decisions are severely constrained by monetary policy. To be truly independent, and to allow socialist economic decisions to be taken, a Scottish currency cannot be left under the control of London.

Even though it is not true that an independent Scotland would be forced to adopt the euro, its use could certainly be an option for a Scottish Government in future if needs be. However, given the economic chaos in the eurozone at the moment no one seriously suggests it for now. There was clearly no sense in tying Greece, Cyprus, Spain and Portugal to a euro exchange rate which leaves their currency wildly over-valued while Germany's is under-valued. This is not just a capitalist device to reinforce a market-driven Europe, but an absurdity which caused misery for workers in southern Europe and must eventually collapse under its own contradictions.

So what currency arrangement should an independent Scotland adopt? A free-floating Scottish currency would seem an ideal solution, but there are drawbacks of course. The Scottish economy would be much stronger than that of the rest of the UK (RUK) with a positive trade balance to contrast with a massive RUK deficit. Scotland's overall balance of payments would also look much better than that of the RUK. In these circumstances, Scotland's free-floating currency, after an initial speculative period, would float upwards against both the RUK pound and the euro, damaging both Scottish exports and tourism.

In the longer term an appreciating Scottish currency may be both inevitable and even desirable, but the economic disruption in the short term would be alarming and damaging. The answer then is to tie an independent Scottish pound to the

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English pound initially, ensuring, for example, that cross-border trade and other economic transactions continue as prior to independence. In the meantime a new Central Bank of Scotland could then be created, ensuring that monetary decision-making was devolved to a truly independent nation. Not all nationalists reject such a proposal and Margo McDonald, for example, has espoused a similar arrangement, as has the Green Party. It should be emphasised that a linkage of one currency to another, albeit on a short-term basis, is by no means uncommon and breaches no international agreements.

It is surprising that the SNP should want to be beholden to the Bank of England and Westminster for such a large portion of its economic policy-making. If we are serious about creating a fairer society where greed and obscene riches are curbed, then we must have total control of the levers of power. Economic independence cannot be achieved while monetary controls are applied in London.

The Scottish Socialist Party is determined to continue to tap into Scotland's tradition for a fair, equitable society, and an independent currency, voluntarily linked to the English pound initially, is the best option in creating an environment for a better Scotland.

Perhaps the most important point to establish here is that Scotland continues to demonstrate its social democratic centre of gravity in stark contrast to the political climate in other parts of the UK like the south of England.

Social democracy belongs to a reformist tradition that seeks not a break with capitalism, replacing it with a better system, as socialists insist, but rather to ameliorate what are seen as its worst excesses. It will champion intervention into industry and the market economy from time to time to reflect the democratic pressures that laissez-faire free market economics seeks to block. Nationalisation of industry is also something it can justify in times of crisis as we saw with RBS for example during the banking collapse of 2008. It will argue that such 'extreme measures' are necessary on the grounds that a wider economic collapse of capitalism was threatened. Typical social democratic reforms include the NHS, welfare state, nationalisation of industry, progressive taxation, public services and conciliation in industrial disputes between employers and their employees.

Scotland's social democratic aspirations can be seen in the abolition of NHS prescription charges (a measure the Scottish Socialist Party pioneered at Holyrood), protecting free education, the provision of free elderly care and free bus travel for over 60s.

The Labour Party and the SNP would describe themselves classically as 'left of centre social democratic parties' – and do so to curry favour with what they believe to be the sentiments of the majority of Scottish voters – even though both have moved substantially to the right in recent times.

It is clear then that Scotland suffers as neo-liberalism entrenched at Westminster, in the City of London and Whitehall maintains its vice-like grip. Given the long-time decline of British capitalism in the past 40 years, this has not been a period of advance for social democracy. Rather it is a time when previously won reforms are being taken back by the employing classes. We can see for example how the welfare state is being rolled back and the NHS is being undermined by creeping privatisation. We see in Britain's draconian anti-trade union laws that advances won by our parents and grandparent's generations at work are being lost. Furthermore, in the words of Johann Lamont we hear the incipient threat to the classic social democratic ethos of universalism Scottish Labour poses when she ominously suggests "We must end the something for nothing culture" in Scotland.

The SSP, by contrast, puts forward social democratic demands to flag up the possibilities only socialism can bring to working class people. So, for example, in

campaigning against the fuel poverty, which sees one in three Scots households live without enough gas and electricity, we call for:

- Doubling the winter fuel allowance paid by the government to senior citizens
- Extending that scheme to the unemployed, low paid and students
- Double current levels of investment in home insulation schemes
- Take the energy industry back into public ownership and distribute the profits progressively.

These demands would clearly help solve the problem and are measures that are possible in the here and now, were the political will in place. The greatest progress made by the organised working class movement in Britain has been secured by struggles and huge sacrifices. More struggles are needed to secure jobs for everyone with a living wage guaranteed and the right to a modern home, health care, educational access and full social provision made available to all.

The SSP's record in standing up for the interests of working people is unsurpassed. In the Scottish Parliament, we put forward Bills to abolish poindings and warrant sales and NHS prescription charges. We advocated the introduction of free school meals to alleviate child poverty and taking the railways back into public ownership. And we stood shoulder to shoulder with workers on strike by joining them on picket lines at every opportunity. We saw the extra-parliamentary work going hand in hand with the work we did inside Holyrood.

The difference between social democracy and socialism is that the former is ultimately pro-capitalist. Socialists on the other hand recognise that capitalism is a system based on exploitation and greed where capital, or the rich, exploit the poor for profit. It is not acceptable to socialists to compromise or conciliate with such a system of institutionalised anti-democratic exploitation and brutality.

Of course social democracy faces an uphill struggle in the face of rampant neo-liberalism. Securing progressive reforms in this counter-reformist period means challenging capitalism itself. Winning reforms means challenging the capitalist system. And to defeat capital means both mobilising the masses and building alliances with non-socialist forces when necessary.

## ★ CHAPTER FOUR

# 'NO, NO, NEVER': WHY THE UK RULING CLASS OPPOSES INDEPENDENCE

### AT THE OUTSET OF THIS PAMPHLET, IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT

independence represents a huge threat to the British state, a profound loss of economic and political power and influence at home and abroad. Consequently, they will do their utmost to stop that from happening.

Their primary argument is that the only realistic prospect of improving Scotland's economic and social conditions is through the UK. Britain is the fifth strongest economy in the world they say. It is at the epicentre of finance capital with the City of London perhaps the single most important financial location. It sees independence jeopardising Britain's international power and economic strength. The last thing it wants is a diminution, however small, in its power and influence at home or internationally at this stage.

The campaign to keep Scotland in the United Kingdom is highly motivated. It may be a motley coalition of political views from UKIP to the Communist Party but it would be foolish to underestimate it. The No side is determined to win and fully intends to throw everything it has into this contest. They realise the stakes are high.

The Labour Party, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and big business share the same philosophy. All support the same neo-liberal, pro-capitalist economic policies and are keen supporters of NATO. They have made it abundantly clear they will fight to the last in this contest. They are also clear about the implications of Scotland achieving independence for Britain's international standing. It will, they conclude, severely weaken the status of British imperialism and add to greater demands for independence elsewhere in the UK. Alistair Darling and David Cameron are determined to avoid a place in history that remembers them solely as the politicians responsible for losing Scotland for the union. Predictably, it is the economy where the Better Together campaign focuses its case.



This might seem surprising, as Britain is now in the middle of the worst economic recession in 80 years, with the living standards of working class people plummeting. But they realise this is the issue that will more than any other determine the result of the referendum. They must deliver a message that promises prosperity by remaining under the UK. It is a tall order but they must do so. They therefore suggest an independent Scotland would be unable to bail out the banks in the way the UK Treasury did so dramatically in 2008. They argue that Scotland would find itself in the same situation as Ireland, Iceland, Greece and Spain, who had all leveraged themselves into a position where they had loaned vast sums of money to those speculating on a housing bubble which then crashed. And, so their theory goes, unlike Britain with its vast economic muscle, Scotland would be too small to cover such banking losses from public funds.

But the fact is an independent Scotland, like the rest of the world, is now well aware of the need to avoid the foolish unregulated financial climate demanded by the City of London throughout the 25 years before 2007/8. An independent Scotland must tightly regulate the banks to avoid this hazardous situation arising in the first place.

The other economic argument the No campaign returns to again and again is the suggestion that an independent Scotland will not be able to deliver the pensions and other welfare benefits accruing to Scots who have paid in to the UK's current social security arrangements. The simple and incontrovertible fact is, however, that if all the taxes, duties, levies and profits raised in Scotland remained here rather than being transferred to the UK Treasury in London and boardrooms in the City of London, it stands to reason we will be better off with independence.

Scaremongering is the favourite tactic of the No campaign. And on security, they suggest, for example, that Scotland will be more vulnerable to attack in today's 'dangerous and unpredictable world'. And they claim Scottish jobs would be lost as Ministry of Defence contracts ceased. Indeed, their website is full of people from BAe Systems at Govan and Rosyth telling us how such contracts guarantee their jobs and our safety. This is an argument the SSP completely rejects. Firstly because the question quickly arises, 'who is it we are defending ourselves from?' Any student of recent history will know that it is the UK which has been invading, occupying and bullying the peoples of the world in recent years. The illegal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan spring most readily to mind but are in truth only the most recent episodes of British aggression. And it is the SSP's strong contention that

## THE CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST SCOTLAND



Scotland is badly damaged by this association. Independence would mean there would be no more young men and women sent to fight in illegal wars for British imperialism. Moreover, Scotland's economy is far too heavily dependent on militarism. There are few manufacturing workplaces in Scotland left not dependent on defence expenditure and the armaments industry. The SSP firmly believes this is an economic record Scotland should leave behind with its British imperialist past.

The TV commentator Andrew Marr is among those observers to make the point, in the reprint of his book 'The Battle for Scotland', that the rest of the UK [RUK] stands to lose far more from independence than Scotland as Britain's seat on the UN Security Council would undoubtedly be at risk as it becomes the smallest nation on it and potentially it's only non-nuclear one. The Scottish Socialist Party would welcome such a development and so would peace loving peoples the world over.

**SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE DOESN'T MAKE YOU A NATIONALIST.**

On the left of British politics there is an oft-repeated criticism that Scottish independence will somehow mean the end of working class unity in these isles. This argument suggests there is some contradiction between supporting

independence and supporting working class unity. Marx's famous dictum, "Workers of all lands unite", is usually cited by most of them to try to justify their point. But the argument is a weak one because it ultimately presses instead for another Labour government and a social democratic Britain. Labour leader Ed Miliband himself insists "poverty [in Scotland] can only be eradicated on a British basis". Millions will scoff at the idea of 'Red Ed' challenging the vested interests who perpetuate poverty in the UK today. The harsher fact is that Labour has had ample opportunity to eradicate poverty and inequality and advance the cause of working class people over the past 20 years and have failed utterly. This is the party that has systematically attacked the welfare state, refused to abolish the iniquitous Bedroom Tax or oppose the ConDem government's attacks on public spending. They refuse point blank, let's not forget, to rescind Thatcher's anti-union laws.

No, today's Labour Party has not the slightest intention of advancing the working class movement in Britain. The unity and solidarity of working people has been undermined by successive Labour governments and frankly it is an insult to the proud internationalist traditions of the Scottish working class to claim they would cease to provide solidarity with fellow workers anywhere after independence. It's not the constitution that stops workers in Scotland and England supporting one another, it's the anti-union laws (the ones Labour refused to repeal when in government) and the rotten leadership of a TUC and Labour Party they can no longer put their faith in.

James Connolly and John Maclean, two of the greatest socialists Scotland has produced, found no difficulty in dismissing this anti-independence argument about the threat to working class unity 100 years ago as each emphasised why socialists support self-determination. Socialists didn't argue that Ireland should not have its independence, or India in 1947 or all those other countries shackled to the British Empire did they? They didn't say to Ghandi 'You will have to wait for India's independence until we all bring down the British Empire together' did they? No, of course not.

So too today, the trade union movement should realise that independence for Scotland is a progressive democratic demand driven primarily, but not exclusively, by the working class. Moreover, this argument, that self-determination divides the working class, taken to its logical conclusion would oppose the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. After all, devolution heralded in a new constitutional reality in Britain. Devolution was ipso facto a concession to self-determination.

'That's devolution' Jack McConnell, Andy Kerr and Tom McCabe would lamely reply to my questioning as an MSP promoting my Bill to abolish NHS prescription charges in Scotland, when I pointed out the Labour Party in Wales had already implemented this measure yet they opposed it. No one but the Tories suggests going back to pre-1997 days do they?

Those who argue that Scottish independence breaks up the unity of the British working class and somehow undermine the socialist struggle in these isles insist the working class should instead enter and reclaim the Labour Party. But there are sizeable and clear flaws in this proposal. Not least that Labour has long abandoned socialism and most social democratic values in favour of a neo-liberal, counter-reformist warmongering philosophy that all too plainly has nothing to offer working people.

Waiting for Labour is time wasted. The working class movement in Britain has waited and waited and waited and been let down repeatedly. The lesson learned has been a hard one, that Blair, Brown and Miliband were unworthy of working class support. They are career politicians on the make. Each offered counter-reformist programmes far less working class emancipation. It is perfectly clear that if we are to achieve socialist advance anywhere in these isles, it will not be via the UK Labour Party. It remains part of the problem, not the solution.

## ★ CHAPTER FIVE

# HOW IS THE REFERENDUM TO BE WON?

*“This has been a phoney war. The real campaign has not started yet. We went into the Holyrood elections [in 2011] 20 points behind [in the polls] and ended up 15 per cent in front.”*

**Alex Salmond, First Minister, New Statesman, 25 June 2013**

### **THE NO CAMPAIGN APPARENTLY BELIEVES VICTORY IN 2014’S REFERENDUM**

is in the bag. An internal paper entitled ‘Project Fear’, leaked to The Herald, claims the only issue outstanding is just how small the Yes vote will be. Government ministers are privately briefing that “We have won the argument on independence. Ordinary people on the doorsteps have made up their mind already. We are now fighting to ensure we’ve got a big enough majority to determine what happens after the referendum.” The source further insisted that the “settled will of the Scottish people is against independence”. Better Together insiders put a key threshold for the Yes vote at 40 per cent – anything below this level would mean, they believe, that the SNP would be unable to argue for another referendum soon (The Herald 16/7/13).

Alastair Darling was said to be furious with the leak, believing the document reeked of complacency in a campaign which has only a slender lead with more than a year to go till the vote. And his worries would appear well-founded. There is a real danger in all this for the No camp, that if it’s support were to become complacent, it can be extremely difficult to reactivate them when any narrowing in the polls occur and a serious loss of momentum sets in. Privately, this is the No campaign’s biggest fear.

Nonetheless, with the opinion polls throughout the past year suggesting support for independence trails by around 10 per cent, the Yes campaign is focused on how to convince a majority of Scots of our case. The strategy to turn the polls around so



**POSITIVELY YES:** Scottish independence offers working class people an opportunity to avoid the brutal effects of the worst recession in 80 years  
PHOTO: Craig Maclean

far has been based on building the biggest grassroots organisation the country has ever seen, and capitalise on the unpopularity of the ConDem government.

There is ground for optimism. The opinion polls show the more people feel informed about the issues involved the more likely they are to vote Yes. A significant number of voters remain undecided and are clearly capable, if mobilised, of swinging the vote. Moreover, when the electorate as a whole is asked how they would vote if the Tories looked like winning again in 2015, the polls tend to show a complete turnaround this time showing a 60:40 preference for independence. And the latest UK polls show Labour and the Tories tied on 36 per cent a piece. A similar test of opinion which asked voters how they would vote if independence meant they would £500 a year better off also revealed a 60:40 lead for Yes. Clearly, there is everything to play for in this vote.

For the SSP, there is crucial evidence that working class people by a majority can be convinced independence offers a better opportunity to avoid the brutal

effects of the worst recession in 80 years. We see the referendum being increasingly fought out against this background. And most economists agree with us that the UK will continue to flatline economically for the remainder of this decade. We will therefore be emphasising the extent to which independence can mean Scots will be substantially better off, provided it means a radical change in the political balance of forces between labour and capital.

The SNP by contrast have tended to emphasise how little will change with independence – that Scotland will keep the pound, keep the Queen, remain in NATO and continue to allow multinational corporations to run our economy. They do so because they think this is the best way to win over those sections of Scottish society who are conservative and fearful of change. This timidity risks alienating the millions of Scots dissatisfied with the status quo. And too much of this innate conservatism inevitably begs the question just how meaningful will independence be for them?

For the Scottish Socialist Party, this conservative approach plays into the hands of our opponents. It writes off the idea that independence offers Scotland an opportunity to address the real and fundamental flaws in our society, of grotesque inequalities in income, health, education and life opportunities.

The SNP are a neo-liberal economic party its true but they are populists who are just as susceptible to pressure from the working class movement in Scotland and the left. The key to winning the referendum lies then in mobilising the working class majority in Scotland by spelling out what they will gain from independence. That means showing them how they will be economically, socially, culturally and politically better off, with full employment and job security, with decent wages and far better conditions of work for everyone, ending 'zero hours' contracts for example, greatly improved housing conditions, superior educational opportunities for their children and far better care for the elderly and vulnerable. We need to be able to convince them this is all possible and to explain that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Above all, we need to convince them that they have a huge stake in this referendum. It can be done. This is a contest that is there to be won, there is no doubt about that. The 2014 referendum will be won by linking up all the existing progressive struggles – against the cuts, for workers' rights, against fuel poverty, for peace – with the independence struggle.

## ★ CHAPTER SIX

# FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST SCOTLAND, A MODERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

*“The Social Revolution is possible sooner in Scotland than in England. Scotland’s wisest policy is to declare for an independent republic, so that the youth of Scotland will not be forced to die for England’s markets.”*

**John Maclean, 1922, ‘When The Clyde Ran Red’ by Maggie Craig**

### **THE FAMOUS ‘RED CLYDESIDE’ LEADER JOHN MACLEAN IS IN MANY WAYS**

the architect of the SSP’s programme for an independent socialist Scotland. Maclean advocated independence in the 1920s as an important step towards democratic socialism in Scotland. He stood for a workers republic. The Scottish Socialist Party’s case for an independent socialist Scotland is inspired by Maclean and others who argued that the organised working class, conscious of its own class and strength, is capable of making greater progress to socialism via independence.

Moreover, we assert today that Scotland’s pronounced social democratic ‘centre of gravity’ as it were, with cherished values of public ownership, curbing inequality, wealth redistribution via progressive taxation, egalitarianism, pursuing peace, a stronger sense of community and support for government intervention in industry, are all more strongly advocated here than down south. The evidence is widely available and no more so than in the last set of Scottish elections, where the SNP, a party to Labour’s left on all social issues, was elected overwhelmingly. This was in stark contrast to the results in England less than twelve months before, when a Lib Dem/Tory coalition beat Labour, despite standing to its right on all social and economic issues.

Scotland has a higher proportion of workers in trade unions and in the public sector. Scotland has also abolished NHS prescription charges and did not introduce elderly care charges or university tuition fees, again demonstrating



greater regard for social democratic principles in social care and education. No one is saying Scotland is a socialist country but it is nonetheless clear the political centre of gravity of the overwhelming majority of the population here is more left of centre and social democratic in outlook than, say, the over-populated, highly-influential and politically powerful south of England.

There is of course nothing new in areas of the UK having more progressive political perspectives from time to time. In the 20th century, south Wales for example was more socially progressive by and large than north, mid or west Wales. There were reasons for this in the industries and struggles that took place in those areas. Similarly, east London was more progressive than, say, Essex or Surrey. Merseyside is more militant than Cheshire. The north east of England had pockets of progress side by side with areas of reaction and backwardness. The same could be said throughout the Midlands. Moreover, as this pamphlet has already touched on in earlier chapters, there is a qualitative difference between socialism and social democracy. The former seeks a complete break with capitalism, whilst the latter seeks to manage it.

For socialists, an independent Scotland would not be based on the exploitation of one class by another. It would be a society where the primary needs of every citizen – health, education, work, housing, social care – would be fully catered for to the highest standard. It would be a society where everyone's contribution would be valued and rewarded, with every citizen's potential realised. It would be a modern democratic republic at peace with itself and with all other citizens of the world. The SSP's vision for an independent socialist Scotland can only be achieved by the working class standing up and fighting back, armed with a clear programme and effective leaders.

So, how do we achieve our goals in the 21st century? Through a combination of conscious struggle, mobilising the majority of the population behind incorruptible, uncompromising leaders. If people believe the rich will give up their power and influence easily, they have learned nothing from history and will be sadly mistaken. Scotland's economy is dominated by powerful multinational corporations whose overriding aim is not to provide goods and services for customers but to maximise profits for their shareholders. They maximise those profits by minimising expenditures such as wages.

In contrast to Norway, our oil industry for example is owned and controlled by five multinational companies: Shell, Exxon-Mobile, BP, Chevron and Texaco. These are some of the wealthiest and most powerful companies in the world. Our financial

## THE CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST SCOTLAND



**A SOCIALIST VOICE: the SSP's Colin Fox sits on the Yes Scotland Advisory Board, ensuring real working class views inhabit the pro-indy campaign**

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

services are similarly run by a handful of powerful, rich banking corporations. Socialism in Scotland will only be achieved when the working class majority stand up to powerful corporate elites and insist the nation's wealth and power is taken into public ownership. The SSP has never believed socialism in Scotland will come via parliament but rather by the power of working people acting collectively. Whilst we work with the SNP on independence, we have fundamental differences with them.

This pamphlet has sought throughout to clarify the SSP's unique political position. The SNP is – and to be fair, has never hidden the fact – a capitalist party. And given the fawning of the UK media over the arrival of the latest royal baby, it is again appropriate we re-iterate our desire, in contrast to the SNP, for a modern democratic republic for Scotland. We can see no place for an unelected, unaccountable and unrepresentative Head of State in a democracy. The British monarchy is an anachronism, a relic from a bygone age that should have been replaced a long time ago. Looking around the world today, one quickly notices that Britain is out of step. The US, for example, doesn't have a monarch as its Head of State. Neither does Germany, France, Italy, or Ireland, or any of the great emerging economies of Russia, China, Brazil, India.

And the truth is the level of debate on this issue in Britain insults our intelligence. On the one hand, we're told the Queen has no powers but is responsible for 50 years of political stability. We are advised hers is largely a ceremonial role, yet all

our MPs and MSPs must swear an oath of allegiance to her. She is the head of our judiciary, the police and armed forces. The truth is, the monarchy has considerable latent power. The Queen appoints the Prime Minister, the powerful Privy Counsellors, bishops, judges, generals and lords. She is also the biggest landowner in Britain, with real estate worth billions, and where did she get it from if not from her 'subjects', the 'commoners'?

Then there is the nonsense that she brings in a great number of tourists to Britain to admire her when we find they come and gawp incredulously at the anti-democratic character of it all. The monarchy is an affront to democracy, progress and equality with its 'divine right of Kings', 'hereditary privilege' and descriptions of a sovereign population as 'subjects' and 'commoners'. Born into privilege, the British Head of State is not elected, not accountable and not representative of the people they seek to lead. The SSP favours an elected head of state who is answerable to the public for all decisions taken. We believe the people are sovereign, not a sovereign born to reign over us, her subjects powerless to bring her to account.

Another affront to Scotland is the stationing of Trident nuclear weapons on Scottish soil. The SSP oppose them unconditionally and wish to see them scrapped immediately. We are ashamed that Scotland belongs to a club of nine notorious nations accommodating these weapons of indiscriminate mass slaughter. These missiles have been deemed illegal under international law, as they are incapable of distinguishing between enemy combatants and innocent civilians. But unlike the SNP, our vision of an independent socialist Scotland would be both a non-nuclear and non-NATO member of the international community.

The Scottish Socialist Party won six seats in the Holyrood Parliament in 2003, and in part this was in response to the uncompromising leadership we gave to the anti-war movement over the illegal British invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.

History and subsequent events have shown how correct we were in the principled stance we took. It was and remains in such stark contrast to Tony Blair and the Labour Party, who played a despicable, warmongering and duplicitous role in that affair, besmirching the name of the British Labour Party for evermore.

You would have thought Britain had learned its lesson in two previous ignominious reverses in Afghanistan in the 19th century but no, in 2014 all British troops will be withdrawn and all those who died between 2001 and now will have died in vain. That is the terrible lesson to be learned, and the SSP takes no comfort from the warnings we gave being upheld by events.

## **THE CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST SCOTLAND**

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The Scottish Socialist Party is building a broad based socialist party, implacably opposed to capitalism and passionate about the possibilities independence can mean for working class people in Scotland.

The SSP remains the most successful socialist party in Scotland these past 80 years. We put forward Bills in the Scottish Parliament that successfully abolished poindings and warrant sales. We pioneered the abolition of NHS prescription charges in Scotland. We presented Bills to introduce free school meals for all Scotland's pupils. We advocated public ownership not privatisation. We have presented the case for free public transport to help address the global dangers presented by climate change. We led the anti-war movement in Scotland against Labour's shameful invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. We continue to stand at the forefront of every progressive campaign in Scotland.

For an independent socialist Scotland, a modern democratic republic, join the Scottish Socialist Party today.

# ★ THE DECLARATION OF CALTON HILL

## **WE THE UNDERSIGNED CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT SCOTTISH REPUBLIC**

built on the principles of liberty, equality, diversity and solidarity.

These principles can never be put into practice while Scotland remains subordinate to the hierarchical and anti-democratic institutions of the British State.

We believe these principles can be brought about by a freely elected Scottish Government with full control of Scotland's revenues.

We believe that the right to self determination is an inherent right, and not a boon or a favour to be granted to us whether by the Crown or the British State.

We believe that sovereignty rests in the people and vow to fight for the right to govern ourselves for the benefit of all those living in Scotland today, tomorrow and in future times. The Government of a country is servant to the people, not master of the people.

We believe that a written Constitution will guarantee, under law, everyone's right to freely vote, speak and assemble; and will guarantee the people's right to privacy and protection, and access to information on all its Government's doings.

We vow to fight for the power to refuse to send our sons and daughters to kill and die in unjust wars in foreign lands.

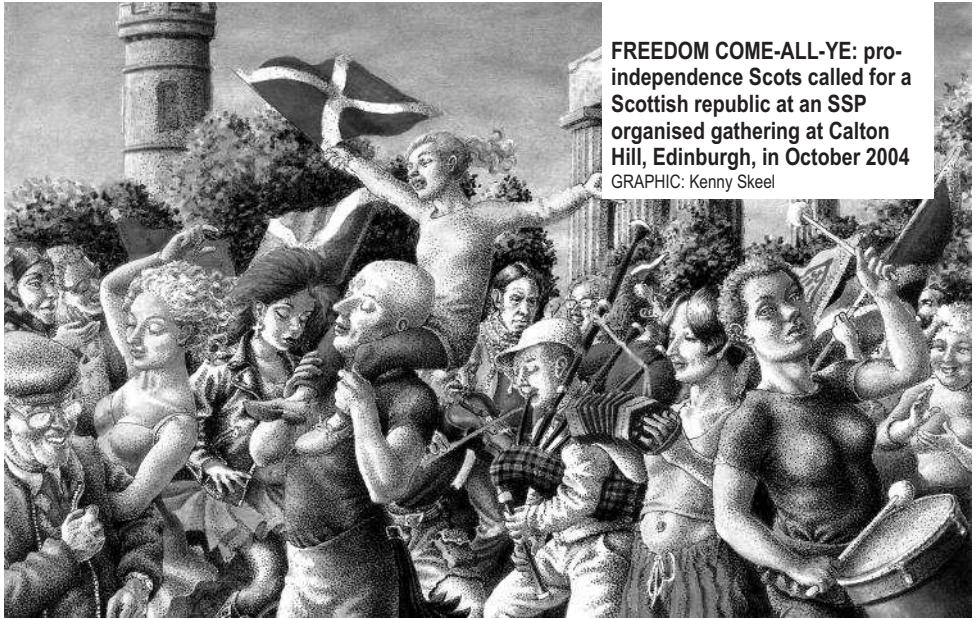
We vow to fight for the power to banish nuclear weapons of mass destruction from our land.

We vow to fight for the power to acquire and restrict the use of property or lands controlled by individuals, corporations or governments from beyond Scotland's borders.

We vow to fight for the power to turn our depopulated land into a haven for those fleeing famine and persecution.

We vow to fight for the power to build a more equal society, free of poverty, through the redistribution of our vast wealth.

We vow to fight for the power to protect our soil, seas and rivers for our children



**FREEDOM COME-ALL-YE: pro-independence Scots called for a Scottish republic at an SSP organised gathering at Calton Hill, Edinburgh, in October 2004**  
GRAPHIC: Kenny Skeel

and for the generations to come. We swear to oppose all forms of national chauvinism, imperialism and racism. We swear to oppose all forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic origin, religion, place of birth, age, disability, sexuality or language.

We aim for an independent Scottish republic in which people may live with dignity and with self respect, free from exploitation, assuming the responsibilities of free women and men.

An independent Scottish republic will negotiate freely and as an equal with governments of other lands.

Our aim is not to erect walls of separation, but to build an outward-looking, Scotland that will extend the hand of friendship to all the peoples of the world.

We vow to continue the struggle for a free, democratic Scottish republic for as long as it may take.

The fight is for freedom.

Sincerely,  
The Undersigned

*9 October 2004*

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- I would like to join the Scottish Socialist Party
- I would also like to join Scottish Socialist Youth
- I would like more info on the Scottish Socialist Party

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# Scottish Socialist Voice

**Yes** One year on: Colin Fox on the mass grassroots pro-indy campaign \* see page 5  
Emily: Denise Morton on Emily Davison's legacy \* see page 9

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## Scottish Socialist Voice

# Labour, Tories: BITTER TOGETHER



DAVID CAMERON: master of cuts



ALASTAIR DARLING: UK OR?

AS bankers' pal Alastair Darling wooed the dwindling band of Scottish Tories in Stirling, Labour unionist splits - led by Gordon Brown - widened.  
A growing revulsion at sharing a platform with the Tories and Lib Dems behind the savage austerity cuts saw the first No camp split, with 'United With Labour' going their own way.  
Former Labour MP and MSP John McAllion lifts the lid on the murky stew - see page 3...

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