

INDEPENDENCE #1 SPECIAL

Scottish Socialist Party

Why we need independence and socialism

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

The Scottish Socialist Party stands four-square for an independent Scotland and fully backs a Yes vote - but we need more...



THE problems facing millions of Scots are caused by the staggering greed of the rich and their privatised, callous capitalist system which feeds the fat cats at the expense of the rest of us.

That's why millions face falling living standards, unemployment, years-long housing lists and slashed services while few live in luxury.

As a socialist party we say that there is another way which uses our wealth and skills not to enrich the few but to meet the needs of the many - putting people before profit.

In such a Scotland, our

energy wealth from oil to wind power would be in public ownership and its profits used to end fuel poverty and the scandal of winter deaths caused by the cold.

In such a Scotland, paying living wages - including to shamefully exploited young people - would both boost demand and lift the shadow of poverty from thousands.

In such a Scotland, Britain's nuclear weapons would be kicked out of the Clyde and our young people would not be dying in foreign wars which the public oppose.

This vision is of a prosperous, peaceful country where all are treated equally whatever their creed, colour, gender or sexual orientation - not one which bribes the wealthy with tax cuts in the hope that some crumbs come to the rest of us.

We say that the present British state is an undemocratic tool of the same bankers and speculators whose gambling debts are causing the bleak world of sackings and cuts.

It is also a willing accomplice to US-led wars which have killed hundreds

of soldiers and thousands in lands like Iraq and Afghanistan - wars which the Scottish people do not support.

The British state is a major roadblock to winning that progressive vision and a Yes vote for independence can bulldoze it aside and open the way to radical change.

That's why we will fully support the Yes campaign and a Yes vote to open the way for a modern democratic republic which can make Scotland a country based on peace, equality and justice for all.

A vision worth fighting for.

SSP at centre of Yes Scotland

PHOTO: Craig Maclean

by Colin Fox, Yes Scotland
Advisory Board member
(writing in a personal capacity)

THE Scottish Socialist Party has supported independence since our inception in 1998.

The Scottish Socialist Alliance, from which we emerged, discussed the issue in great detail before coming out in favour of independence. We rejected the formulation favoured by Labour lefts and Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party for example that Independence could only be achieved in the dim and distant future once socialism had been established across the UK.

That view held that Scotland's right to self-determination was a distraction from the British class struggle. We disagreed then and now insisting that Scotland's demand for independence is part and parcel of that class struggle. Independence would, we argued, mean that Scotland's working class majority would be better off and also weaken the British state and its imperialist aspirations by freeing Scotland from its warmongering policies.

The classic left argument that Scottish independence would undermine the unity of the British working class is, for us, an out of date formulation. Whilst it was true that working people in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee have more in common with their counterparts in London, Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester than with rich Scots capitalists like Sir David Murray or Fred Goodwin the same was also true of those workers in Athens, Madrid, Buenos Aires, New York and Beijing.

Our support for independence does not somehow negate our internationalism or our socialism. Indeed as Scotland is clearly a nation just like those others, and the vast majority of us see ourselves as Scottish [rather than British] we have the same right to self-determination as anyone else.



THE THICK OF IT: SSP co-spokesperson Colin Fox (left) at the Yes Scotland launch

The key consideration for socialists is to examine where the demand for independence is coming from? And in Scotland it remains the undeniable case that support for self-determination is strongest amongst the working class majority who see it as a route out of economic degradation and political exploitation.

After winning six seats at Holyrood in 2003 the SSP helped establish the Scottish Independence Convention [SIC]. At a packed meeting in Edinburgh's Dynamic Earth on 30 November 2005, the anniversary of John Maclean's death, the cross party, broad based SIC was launched amid a fanfare. I spoke on behalf of the SSP and we have been, of all the party's involved, its most dedicated supporter ever since.

Throughout our involvement in the independence movement we have respectfully highlighted our vision of a socialist Scotland.

Ours is an anti-capitalist, democratic, workers republic dedicated to advancing progressive causes - socialism, equality, peace and prosperity for all - at home and abroad. Independence is for us a means to an end not an end in itself.

We wish to establish an independent, socialist Scotland free from capitalist exploitation and imperialist warmongering.

The Scottish Socialist Party has gained considerable respect within the independence

movement over the years for our commitment to this common cause. We are proud to be the standard bearer for the values espoused by the Scots radicals of yesteryear going back to Burns and beyond.

The Scottish Socialist Party sits on the Yes Scotland Advisory Board therefore to bring these ideals, and our considerable experience, to the fore in building support for independence.

Our job is to make sure the interests of working class people are always uppermost in that campaign. More than anyone else we understand why working class people are sceptical about promises made by establishment politicians. We will work to ensure our class is fully mobilised in pursuing this noble cause.

These are exciting times for Scotland. With a crucial vote about to be taken the Scottish Socialist Party is excited and keen to play a prominent role in changing the course of history.

We have no doubt the defenders of the United Kingdom will throw everything they can at us.

I hope that every SSP supporter will join me in the Yes Scotland campaign and seize the chance to change our country forever.

So many of our great goals can be brought significantly closer by securing a decisive victory for independence in October 2014.

Scottish Socialist Party



Join the SSP here

Fill in this form and send it to: Scottish Socialist Party, Suite 370,
4th Floor Central Chambers 93 Hope St, Glasgow G2 6LD.
Or telephone: 0781 126 5388

Or see our website: www.scottishsocialistparty.org

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YOUTH AND INDEPENDENCE



by Andy Bowden

A coalition of young activists from the SSP, SNP, Greens, ISG and independents met in a packed meeting last week for the launch of YASI - Youth and Students for Scottish Independence.

Launched on a similar perspective as the cross party Women for Independence campaign, YASI aims to bring together young people from all political organisations and none to secure a Yes vote in 2014.

The role YASI will play is even more important given the recent reports that 16 and 17-year-olds will be granted a vote in 2014.

Reforms

Young people are the age demographic most likely to vote for independence, with obvious reasons - young people can remember none of the social democratic reforms of the British State, and have grown up watching the UK privatise its health service, bail out bankers and conduct two consecutive wars in the past ten years, meaning the last time the UK was not at war for 16-year-olds will have been when they were at nursery.

The challenge we face is that so disgusted with mainstream politics are most young people, they are unlikely to vote in elections. If YASI can register thousands of young people - especially the young working class - they can give young people a voice in 2014. If YASI is able to mobilise young people however, they must outline a Scot-

land that is attractive to them and marks a significant change from the British State.

This does not mean everyone in YASI must propose a full socialist programme, but it does mean outlining a vision of Scotland that fits with most young people's left of centre, anti-war opinion.

There's pretty obvious territory to fight this on - the removal of Trident, opposition to foreign wars, maintenance of free education, support for an equal minimum wage, etc.

Unfortunately, the SNP's flirtation with NATO endangers this vision of a neutral Scotland, and there are those who want to run an apolitical Yes campaign.

If young people are going to be mobilised to vote Yes, it will have to be outlined how an independent Scotland will be better for them - not by sacrificing an appeal to Scotland's pro-public services, left of centre, social-democratic majority to appeal to mythical Tories who support independence.

Potential

The reported dropping of Devo Max as an option on the ballot gives another potential front to win support for young people to independence - there will be no other way to stop a future Westminster Government from cutting housing benefit from the under-25s if the Tories return to power bar independence.

This gives a pretty clear sign that for young people to guarantee their own independence in their lives, they must support Scotland's independence from Westminster.

Women and independence

by Sandra Webster

MANY polls suggest that in the Yes campaign for Scottish independence, it is mainly women who remain undecided. Our votes will be pivotal and it is important that we do not opt out but vote Yes.

It is not surprising that we are being so reticent as we are bombarded by fearful propaganda from the No campaign, warning of the dangers of an independent Scotland going it alone among bigger more established nations of the world with no big-brother England to fight our own corner.

I don't subscribe to their rhetoric. I am optimistic that independence is the best option for not only my family but all our families.

It is the only way our voices can be heard and listened to, I look on in dismay as a Tory government in Westminster has so much impact on all our lives.

Cuts to frontline services have the most impact on our lives and we feel helpless to do anything about them.

Profit

The NHS is being dismantled and profit put before patient care. I am optimistic that it is only in an independent Scotland that we can start to have a conversation about how our wealth is distributed for the good of all.

As the mother of three children, who are growing and finding their place in the world, I worry about what the future will bring.

I want a nation where children will be well supported in their early years, into young adulthood and beyond - where education for all is valued and a state education is as good as the one received by children who attend private school.

I know we can invest in further education and career opportunities so everyone can find their place and those that need support don't have to struggle to find it but know it's available.

This is such an exciting time for us - the chance to create a fairer, kinder society. That is why women must go out and vote Yes to an independent Scotland.

A Scotland where everyone is supported, where our children are valued and where our contribution to society is recognised not criticised.

Let's vote Yes and ensure women are the heartbeat of an independent nation. A place where we can have a conversation with each other and come together to create a new, beautiful Scotland.

Indy boost to UK workers

by Ken Ferguson

A key claim made by Labour politicians is that independence will cut off Scottish workers from their counterparts in the rest of the UK and weaken the fight for change.

It is a false claim made for party advantage rather than any real concern about building the power of trade unionists to oppose cuts and sackings and the vicious assault on pay and living standards.

Workers need to recall that the same Labour politicians had 13 years in power in London and eight in Edinburgh, during which they were enthusiastic backers of the Tory policy of service privatisation and the robbery of the public through the Public Finance Initiative.

The levels of interest charged for PFI hospitals, schools, etc, would shame a back-street loan-shark and are now creating such pressure that hospitals face closures and workers pay cuts to feed the fat cats.

Pressure

The supposed efficiency of the private sector has been exposed as a lie by the G4S Olympic security fiasco, where they were rescued by public workers in the police and military.

Despite warm words from Miliband to union leaders, Labour in power kept in place the most restrictive anti-union laws in Europe while they courted the same city fat cats whose greed caused to crisis we now face.

Indeed, far from independence stopping Scottish workers extending solidarity to colleagues elsewhere, it is Tory laws - warmly backed by Labour - which make such action virtually illegal.

In the modern democratic Scottish republic we seek, unions will be a key part of the pressure to adopt policies based on putting people before profit and harnessing Scotland's wealth to the needs of the many, not the few.

The friends of big business in the big parties fear such a vision, knowing full well that such an example, far from weakening to fight for change across the UK and beyond, will also strengthen the resolve for change there.

SCOTLAND MUST BREAK WITH WAR

UNPARDONABLE FOLLY: the proposal by SNP leaders to abandon their historic opposition to NATO membership for a post-Independence Scotland has been described as its 'Clause Four' moment



THE Scottish Socialist Party supports an independent Scottish republic free from both nuclear weapons and involvements in bloody, foreign wars.

We are therefore opposed to membership of NATO which is a nuclear-based alliance waging foreign wars largely as junior partners of the US.

The idea that an independent Scotland could expel Britain's weapons of mass destruction from the Clyde while joining the alliance they are a key part of really is so unlikely that most independence supporters don't believe it.

Barely credible

It is also barely credible that an independent Scotland in NATO would be able to opt out of bloody adventures such as the Afghan war which is run by NATO and has killed thousands of Afghans and hundreds of soldiers, many of them Scots.

The SSP says that an independent

Scotland not only needs to break with war but to pursue an alternative peace policy at home and abroad.

Faced with the challenges of unemployment, recession and a mushrooming environmental crisis, Scottish Socialists say that in an independent Scotland our resources and skills need to be put to work to meet these challenges.

Solidarity

Scotland is not the poor impoverished economic weakling beloved of the unionist parties but a country rich in energy, natural resources, talent and skills to transform life at home and extend solidarity across the globe.

However, although independence is an essential step to winning such a change it will need a democratic socialist republic to break with the old world of greed and put people before profit.