

# Scottish Socialist VOICE



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OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>  
PEOPLE  
FIRST

MARCH & RALLY  
GLASGOW GREEN  
11.30 MOVE OFF 12 NOON  
TO KELMINGROVE PARK  
RALLY 1.30 TILL 3PM

# NO MORE



# TORY CUTS!

# CUPAR RACISM VERDICT HANDS WEAPON TO ZIONISTS

by Ken Ferguson

**THE** conviction of St Andrews University student Paul Donnachie for “racially aggravated conduct” after he soiled the Israeli flag in a shared university student room hands a major victory to the Zionist lobby.

After a night out Donnachie called at a room shared with a friend and the complainer in the case ultra Zionist Chanan Reitblat, a US citizen.

The incident at the centre of the case involved Donnachie putting his hands down his trousers and wiping them on an Israeli flag on the wall of the room.

What is clear that given that both Donnachie and his co accused Sam Colchester (who was found not proven) were both inebriated their action presented an opportunity to the Zionist lobby which they duly grasped.

Donnachie accepted that his conduct in wiping his hands on the flag could be seen as bad taste. However he wasn't facing charges of bad taste but of racially aggravated conduct

At the heart of the case was the question of whether the actions of the accused were legitimate protests against Israeli state policy or a personal attack on Mr Reitblat based on his Jewish identity.

This came down to evidence of what was said in the brief exchanges during the incident with the prosecution case being that Donnachie had said Israel is a terrorist state, this is a terrorist flag, you (Reitblat) are a terrorist.

Donnachie agreed he made the first two statements but denied ever calling Reitblat a terrorist.

This third statement was central in determining if the incident amounted to an attack on Reitblat on the basis of his



identity or a political protest about Israeli policy.

The only evidence that Reitblat had been called a terrorist came in his own evidence and was uncorroborated by any other witness yet accepted by the Sheriff as true in his judgement.

More significantly Sheriff MacNair flatly refused to allow three defence witnesses – two from Jews for a Just Peace and one from the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign - to give evidence for the defence.

They would have explored the issues of Zionism, Jewish identity and the policies of the Israeli state and how they differ but Sheriff MacNair refused them a hearing on the grounds that they could not assist him on the matter.

This meant that the only witness for the defence responding to eight prosecution witnesses was Donnachie himself who gave a clear explanation of his actions as a criticism of Israel not an attack on Reitblat based on race.

Finding Donnachie guilty the Sheriff clearly showed that he would indeed have benefited from the evidence of the expert defence witnesses he denied a hearing.

The implications of his action were spelt out in a statement from Jews for a Just Peace who said:

“We are concerned that the

Sheriff did not allow Jewish witnesses for the defence to be called to give evidence regarding the crucial distinction between Zionism – a political position of support for a Jewish state in Israel/Palestine – and Jewishness – a person's religion or ethnicity.

“Jews (religious or not religious) may or may not be Zionists, and even those who support the idea of a Jewish state may be critical of its government. Like any other group of people, Jews have a wide range of political opinion and to imply that Jewishness coincides with support for Israel is to make a racist assumption.

“The Israeli state is a political entity and does not act on behalf of Jews as a whole. For very many Jews the idea that they should be automatically associated with the Israeli state is deeply worrying, not just because it is inaccurate, but also because it is potentially dangerous. The Israeli government does not act in our name and we are not responsible for its actions.

“Criticism of the political concept of basing a state around a single religious or ethnic group or of the actions of the Israeli state is wholly legitimate; and the ability to criticise a political position or a national government is a basic freedom that must be guarded tenaciously.”

This stands in sharp contrast

to Sheriff MacNair who said:

“Saying that a state is terrorist says that everyone within the state is terrorist. He doesn't distinguish between the state and the people.

“Mr Donnachie doesn't distinguish between the government of Israel and the state.”

The sheriff then took less than 5 minutes to come to a decision. In relation to Paul, he said that there was “only one issue of fact between them” [the statement, “you are a terrorist”].

“I hold that you said, that's a terrorist flag, Israel is a terrorist state, and you are a terrorist.

“Section 50A requires malice or ill will towards a person based on their membership of an ethnic group; which includes nationality and association with that group.”

“It was malice and ill will because of his presumed membership of Israel.”

Opponents of Israeli policy now potentially face charges of racism in campaigning against the actions of that state.

Despite efforts to spin this case as a drunken escapade by hooligans it actually forms part of the ongoing Zionist campaign to criminalise opponents of Israel.

Mr Reitblat is a hard line Zionist who refuses to recognise Israel's illegal occupation of territory and believes that a greater Israel should include parts of Egypt and Syria.

There can be no doubt that he is a willing instrument in the ongoing Zionist drive to marginalise Israeli policies of occupation, bombing and repression.

The verdict is certain to be appealed but all concerned with this bizarre judgement should support the solidarity demonstration in Cupar on 13 September when Paul is due to be sentenced.

# DOES ANYBODY WANT TO BE LABOUR LEADER?

by John McAllion

**SHORTLY** after Labour's disastrous performance in the last Scottish elections, Tom Harris became the first of the Party's Scottish MP's to announce that he would not be using his vote in the electoral college to elect the party's new Scottish leader.

With MPs outnumbering MSP's in the Party's Electoral College, he argued that their continued involvement in the election of Labour leader in the Scottish Parliament could no longer be justified.

Three months later he announced that he would not only now vote in these elections as an MP but would stand himself as a candidate if the Party was interested in having him.

Harris is not well known outside of his own constituency. He had recently failed to get elected to Labour's shadow cabinet in London.

He strongly supported the illegal invasion of Iraq, backed foundation hospitals and ID cards, and was a robust advocate of tougher asylum rules and anti-terrorism legislation.

So what made this self-confessed, dyed-in-the-wool and largely anonymous Blairite suddenly believe that he had the political vision to spark a revival that would see Scottish Labour rise phoenix like from the ashes of last May's electoral mauling?

If those who knew him, his fellow MPs, did not rate him as Shadow Cabinet material, why should those who knew little of him, the Party membership, entrust him with leading the Party out of the Scottish political wilderness?

The answer to these questions lies in the near chaotic state of Labour's



current efforts to find a replacement for Iain Gray who is scheduled to stand down as Labour's Scottish leader this autumn.

In announcing his own candidacy, Harris himself bemoaned the absence of credible MSP candidates and worried over the bizarre possibility that, with Gray set to go, there would be no leadership campaign to select his successor.

If nobody else wanted the job, he at least was up for it.

His concerns are well-founded. More than 3 months have passed since the catastrophic defeat with little or no public debate about the way forward for Scottish Labour.

An internal party review led by Jim Murphy MP and Sarah Boyack MSP is grinding away behind the scenes.

Occasionally, it surfaces into public view via press leaks that serve only to stir up the dinosaur tendency lurking in Scottish Labour ranks.

A suggestion that Scottish Labour might develop its own separate identity and even new policies that were "made in Scotland" was publicly slapped down by one senior Scottish MP as "the slippery slope

to separatism".

He described those in the party who harboured such thoughts as "deluded". Labour was and only could be a British party.

Meanwhile Lord McConnell began by calling for MP's to neither nominate nor vote as MPs in the election of the Scottish leader.

Within a few months he about turned and conceded that an MP could even stand as Scottish leader so long as he or she was willing to serve in the Scottish Parliament after the 2015 election.

McConnell was now echoing a party line coming from Westminster that an MP rather than an MSP would be the likely next leader. Douglas Alexander, while making it clear that he was not interested in the job, broke cover to support the MP for Scottish leader line.

Clearly, Scottish Labour's hierarchy shared Tom Harris' view that their current crop of MSPs were not up to the job of leading the party in Scotland.

Harris' intervention at least provoked the friends of Labour MSP Ken McIntosh to let it be known that he "absolutely intends to stand".

They explained that, like

other possible MSP candidates, he will only declare his candidacy after the publication of the party's internal review in September.

So, is the stage set for a fierce internal battle between Scottish-based and London-based Labour?

Will the "deluded" party members who believe in an autonomous Scottish party dare to challenge the British perspective of the leading Scottish MPs in Westminster?

Will we now witness an open struggle for the soul of the Scottish party?

Based on the history of past contests for Scottish leader the answer can only be no.

Donald Dewar, Jack McConnell and Wendy Alexander were all elected unopposed to the Scottish leadership. Henry McLeish and Iain Gray were opposed only by candidates who shared their same New Labour credentials.

Scottish Labour simply does not do ideological struggle.

This time there may well be a contest. MP may even stand against MSP.

But there will be no open fighting over the future direction of the party.

The internal party review will endorse neither full fiscal autonomy nor devolution max as Labour's answer to independence.

The likes of Murphy and Alexander, who hunger for a seat in a British Cabinet, will not tolerate an autonomous Scottish party pursuing independent policies.

Scottish Labour's role is to help elect a Labour Government in London.

It exists to strengthen, not to weaken the union. Whoever emerges as the new Scottish leader, that will not change.

# RAGING STORMS A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME

by Roz Paterson

IT travelled over 1,100 miles of the US coastline, killing at least 40 people, including one woman who drowned in her car waiting to be rescued from a flooded road, left three million without power, and cost in the region of 10 billion dollars.

Yet, compared to Katrina, the hurricane that almost wiped New Orleans from the map in 2005, Hurricane Irene was a let-down, a damp squib, a mere tropical storm.

Well, so some folks is saying.

People like those hard-line Republicans who don't want to U-turn on federal budget cuts, the crazed Virginia surfer who went to ride the big waves and consequently waved goodbye to life – like, duh - and, of course, the climate change deniers.

These latter are the ones blasting authorities for 'over-reacting', for evacuating New York when, as it turned out, the storm surge did not cascade into the subway system, wash away Wall Street and flush Manhattan into the Atlantic.

For them, the fact that Irene lost power somewhere between the Bahamas and Battery Park is a gift from the gods. Now, they think, they can lambast the climatologists as alarmists and mad green fascists, and everyone will listen.

Except, of course, they won't.

Hurricanes happen in the US, and this is slapbang in the middle of hurricane season, and furthermore, hurricanes are not caused by global warming.

All this is true.

But Irene was a particularly dangerous, big, slow hurricane, and the intensity of hurricanes



**BATTERING: Irene hits North Carolina**

is increased by the atmospheric conditions brought on by global warming.

The planet is four per cent warmer than it was 40 years ago, and warm air holds more water vapour than cold, which makes for stronger, more dangerous storms.

Plus, Irene came hot on the heels of a summer of floods, wildfires and deluges – 2011 was already a freak year and, as if to prove the point, while the hurricane was tracking along the Eastern Seaboard, Houston's temperature spiked at 109 degrees, its hottest day on record.

Speaking on Democracy Now!, Bill McKibben, author of *Earth: Making a Life on a Tough, New Planet*, commented:

"So far this year – it's only August – the US has suffered more billion-dollar, weather-related disasters than any year in history."

In other words, this is hardly a time to relax and take a ride in your gas-guzzling Humvee.

Man-made global warming has already raised the planetary temperature by one

degree Celsius and there is, alas, another one degree in the pipeline through carbon dioxide already released into the atmosphere but not yet making its impact.

Thus, we need to adapt.

The evacuation of low-lying areas of New York is a taste of things to come. Like the Japanese, a people well acquainted with full-on, life-threatening disasters, maybe we should have an annual, national disaster prevention day, where we learn to locate the nearest exits and think ourselves through what happens when the waters rise and the wind blows.

And not just in an immediate, sirens-blaring sense. We need to think how we'll feed ourselves and switch on the lights when failed harvests and blackouts kick in. Natural disasters are soon to become a fact of our lives and we can't turn the clock back.

But we also need to apply the brakes. If we want the planet to remain habitable, we have to break the hydrocarbon habit, and the swelling,

determined protests happening right now outside the White House are trying to ensure that this happens.

Global capitalism can only think in the short-term, and in terms of profits made; it's a crude and simple beast. But we need more complex solutions if we are to have any kind of quality of life, or life, in fact.

We can't keep fuelling our economies with oil, especially not with oil from Alberta, where the tar sands comprise the second biggest pool of carbon on the planet. A second Saudi Arabia, if you like.

The current wave of Washington protests, where the crowds grow only noisier, angrier and less fearful of arrest, relate to the Keystone XL pipeline, which will see tar sand oil funnelled from Canada right down to the Gulf of Mexico.

McKibben pulls no punches: "If we start burning these unconventional fuel sources in a big way, then it's essentially game over for the climate."

And while the people rage, so does the weather. We have never, he says, been here before, and the forecast is, to put it mildly, changeable. "This oil has to stay in the ground. It's as important as it is that Brazil guards its rainforest."

Congress can storm and rant, but Obama has the power of veto, and this could be the true test of his presidency. Can he wreak change?

Will he heed the people on the streets? And the trees ripped up by their roots, the power lines crashing to the ground, the matchwood houses floating on a filthy tide of sewage?

Weather ain't what it used to be, you know.

■ [www.TarSandsAction.Org](http://www.TarSandsAction.Org)  
 ■ [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)

# WHY I JOINED THE SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY

by Campbell Martin

I passionately believe in an independent Scotland. If we are to tackle the social problems that continue to blight our country, we need all the powers that only come with independence.

Having said that, I see no point in securing independence for Scotland only to remake our new country along the lines of the failed British model. Sadly, under the millionaire-funded SNP, that is exactly what we would get.

Even before it was elected to government, the SNP had begun to move its political positioning – some in the party argue they simply moved to the centre-ground, as did the Labour Party under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. However, by abandoning its left-of-centre position, the

SNP followed Labour in moving away from the people of Scotland. The Nationalist victories in 2007 and 2011 were not endorsements of the SNP in its new centrist position, but rather were rejections of New Labour and the war-mongering, free-market, pro-big business, capitalist organisation it had become. The ‘slightly-less-to-the-right’ SNP simply benefited from being seen as the party best-placed to beat New Labour at those elections.

The reality is, though, if the SNP delivers its Independence Referendum – and with a majority in parliament, surely it must – and if a ‘yes’ vote is secured in that referendum, the independent Scotland we would have under an SNP Government would be one remarkably similar to the Tory and Labour British Governments we have had over the past fifteen years. The SNP is now a ‘moderate centre-right’



political party, which would continue to endorse the capitalist economic system that has brought the western world to its knees. The ‘moderate centre-right’ SNP’s big idea for jobs in an independent Scotland is to reduce the taxation paid by multi-national corporations, so they could come here for a few years, take all the hand-outs going, exploit ordinary Scots men and women by paying wages so low they would still qualify for social benefits – as is the case now – and then those companies would disappear, ‘like snaw aff a dyke’, as Alex Salmond might say.

With independence, Scotland would once again become a sovereign nation, but under a government of any so-called ‘mainstream’ party – SNP, Labour, Tory, Liberal Democrat – an independent Scotland would remain answerable to the capitalist overlords of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the spivs and speculators of global financial markets.

Instead, independence should be the catalyst that allows us to tackle the bread-and-butter issues that affect every one of us, every day of our lives. With the full powers that only come

with independence, we can radically transform Scottish society – putting people before profit; taking power companies into public ownership, so elderly Scots don’t needlessly die in winter because they can’t afford to heat their homes; building affordable homes for rent, creating construction jobs and addressing the massive housing waiting lists across Scotland; providing hope and opportunity to our young people through the creation of real apprenticeships; maximising the educational attainment of every child; organising national production and international trading agreements to meet the needs of Scottish

society; allowing ordinary Scots to once again know the dignity of work, the pride that comes from being able to support themselves and their families; building communities where everyone is valued and where each individual, irrespective of age, has a role to play.

This is the Scotland we need if we are to meet the aspirations of ordinary Scots. Thankfully, the political party offering the policies to create that Scotland is still with us, having survived an experience that would have killed-off lesser bodies.

Everyone knows how traumatic the last few years have been for the Scottish Socialist Party. Issues far removed from politics dealt a body blow to the socialist movement in Scotland, but the SSP held to its principles and has emerged stronger in its commitment to deliver a better country for all the people of Scotland.

The corner has been turned and a radical, socialist alternative for Scotland is back on the table.

All the so-called mainstream parties in Scotland are now on the right of the political spectrum, to varying degrees, and all are totally committed to the failed capitalist system. It is only the SSP that’s over there, on the left, with the people of Scotland. That’s why I’ve joined the Scottish Socialist Party, to help in the fight for a better, fairer Scotland.

## BIOGRAPHICAL DETAIL ON CAMPBELL MARTIN

His father was a docker at the Ayrshire port of Ardrossan and a like long TGWU member.

Campbell worked a BAE at Prestwick and joined the SNP in disgust at the Labour move to the right and abandonment of Clause 4.

He was elected an SNP councillor in Ardrossan.

He was elected as a list MSP for the West of Scotland in 2003 and expelled in 2004 for opposing the move to the right by the then leader John Swinney.

He stood as an independent in the 2007 Scottish Parliament election winning 15 per cent of the poll and 4,423 votes out polling both Labour and the SNP in the towns of Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stenston.

He currently edits the3towns.com weekly online newspaper.

# THE RISING REVOLT

by *Richie Venton, SSP national workplace organiser*

AS the financial markets fluctuate like a frenzied rodeo show, and plunge towards meltdown, workers and communities are being hammered with the price of the crisis created by the rich and their economic system.

Every opponent of cuts must build maximum support for those workers and local communities taking action to resist the cuts, and help forge a mass STUC anti-cuts demonstration in Glasgow on 1 October.

They also need to be arguing and organising in the unions for a united one-day stoppage of the entire public sector later that month.

## Worse off

Working class people face brutal consequences as rich protect their profits and privileges.

Asda – themselves no slouches when it comes to profiteering out of workers' pockets – have published a survey revealing that families are on average £11 a week worse off than a year ago.

This results from a cocktail of pay cuts, price rises and pension cuts meted out by governments and big business.

The cost of travelling (including to work) has officially risen 16 per cent; rents have gone through the roof by 16 per cent; utility bills are rocketing by 18-19 per cent; childcare costs a crushing £800 more than last year; and food price inflation beggars belief every time you reach the checkouts.

Across the entire public sector – with knock-on effects



in the so-called third sector – workers have had their pay frozen, and in some cases cut in absolute terms.

Pension contribution hikes are a double taxation on these workers, driving many below the breadline.

Private sector workers are being told they are lucky to have a job, let alone a pay rise.

One in nine retail outlets in Glasgow may have been shut by the recession, but the retail giants' profits are booming, whilst they slash their workforces, demanding more work of less staff, with below-inflation pay awards.

## Resistance grows

As we report in this *Voice* hundreds marched in support of the Accord Centre for disabled adults in Glasgow's east end, being shut by the Labour council in favour of a bus park for the Commonwealth Games.

Teachers are about to be balloted for strike action by the EIS union – in opposition to savage cuts to their incomes through 50 per cent increases

in their pension contributions [from 6.4 per cent to 9.6 per cent of

salaries] for pensions that will be worth 15 per cent less – after working longer!

Parents and others in Renfrewshire are up in arms at the plan by the Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board to shut the children's ward in Paisley's Royal Alexandra Hospital. Over 3,000 people have signed the online petition in a mere 3 weeks. They have poured into public meetings in protest.

## Strikes and protests

Workers in Quarriers are striking against horrendous pay cuts; ten per cent of staff stand to lose £7,000 a year! They are incensed that this voluntary sector employer, funded mostly by local councils, is using the excuse of a £1.4million deficit to claw back £2.4million from staff's pay packets!

And coastguards are mounting a campaign to stop the slaughter of the life-and-death service they provide. The Tories were forced to beat a

partial retreat by the fury that erupted in affected communities when they announced their original plans

But they still want to shut eight stations – including Forth and Clyde – and shed 140 jobs. Their scheme would mean no coastguard station along the entire coast from Holyhead (in North Wales) to Aberdeen.

This is mind-boggling recklessness towards the health and safety of countless communities and hundreds of thousands of passengers, workers at sea and on land, and people using the coastal waters for recreation.

## Build the STUC People First march

Trade unionists, community activists, disabled people, students, unemployed campaigners and socialists are stepping up their efforts to build a mighty march on Saturday 1 October, in Glasgow, on the People First demo and rally called by the STUC.

This is the immediate opportunity to put tens of thousands of Scots on the streets as the smug Tories assemble for their annual Party conference.

It also comes just weeks before the SNP government are due to publish their spending plans for next year giving the lie to the tale that they are opposed to cuts.

It is the chance to unite the various struggles and strikes.

It is a golden opportunity to build workers' confidence for a one-day strike across the entire public sector, which would be a powerful battering ram against the Butchers' Cabinet and their servile echoes at local level.

# VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE

**SOME** of those in the firing line spoke to the *Voice*

All these cases nail the government lie that frontline services will be protected during the cuts; that only 'backroom' staff will suffer.

You can't get much more front-line than a centre for disabled adults; Quarriers staff who care for vulnerable children and adults; a kids' hospital ward; or life-saving coastguards.

Their cases deserve the wholehearted backing of anyone who – like the Scottish Socialist Party – thinks taxing the rich is a better idea than attacking the rest of us!

## COASTGUARDS:

This is a tragedy waiting to happen!

Forth and Clyde stations both face closure. In Clyde's case, they cover 2,500 miles of rugged (often treacherous) coastline; 336 square nautical miles. And local knowledge is irreplaceable. The government, by contrast, seems to be more concerned with saving money than saving lives.

Richard Morgans, one of the coastguards and PCS union member, told the *Voice*:

"We deal with an area including 10 major islands; 25-30 cruise liners with about 53,000 passengers; ferries to Ireland and the islands (Arran alone ferries 6.4million passengers a year; Ireland 1.9million).

We deal with harbours and vessels, with historically very high accident rates, and 12 airstrips.

Annual figures measure incidents according to Distress, Urgency and Safety. Clyde coastguard station was the 3rd highest of all three categories combined last year, and 2nd highest on the two most urgent categories of incident. And yet they want to shut us down!"



The PCS union members have created an online and paper petition; won support off MPs, MSPs and councillors, and plan to hold a rally in Greenock. The central lesson of the campaigns that saved Stornoway and Shetland stations from closure is the need to ignite the fury of local communities, which the SSP has pledged to assist the coastguards in doing.

## CHILDREN'S WARD, ROYAL ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL PAISLEY

As part of £57million cuts, the Health Board want to shut the children's ward (Ward 15) in Paisley's hospital, shunting sick kids and their families at least 10 miles to Yorkhill, Glasgow.

As Sandra, one of the mothers at the heart of the campaign to stop the closure told the first campaign public meeting:

"I have two sons, with autism, and Ward 15 is more than just a safety net. You can go there and it will be fixed, whereas it would take me 45 minutes by public transport to Yorkhill, and there are no buses

from my area on a Sunday!

"Last year there were nearly 5,000 admissions to Ward 15; that's 5,000 clinical reasons

against closure. Kids who are seen and treated but not admitted to the ward save the NHS money, on top of the £10billion a year that carers save the NHS!"

Sheila, a UNISON rep, warned that people need to "talk with their feet as well as their mouths. Staff don't know where they are going to be working next. We need to keep the services local, instead of losing yet another service at RAH – when we have the second busiest A&E unit in Scotland."

SSP members are helping other parents and staff mount a resistance, demanding that the Health Board and local council refuse to pass on cuts, and demand the cash off Holyrood to save all local health services

## QUARRIERS:

Quarriers workers, members of UNISON, are striking against crucifying pay cuts of up to 23 per cent, plus attacks on pensions, sick pay and other conditions.

An overwhelming 3:1 vote to strike gives a hint of their fury at bosses who are using the recession and public sector cuts as an excuse to slash wages, and attack and try to victimise those workers who stand up for themselves.

Several are being threatened with Gross Misconduct for speaking out about the impact of the cuts on them. Top management will take cuts of 3 per cent, whereas the rest of the workforce face cuts of £3-5,000, and more for some.

Councils lacking the backbone to fight for more funding off the Scottish government are passing on their cuts to voluntary sector bodies that they largely fund, like Quarriers, in the hope people don't spot the guilty politicians' role in these cuts.

One Quarriers worker told the *Voice*:

"I stand to lose over £400 a month. I have 3 children. I am going to struggle to pay my mortgage. I will need to give up my car as I won't be able to afford to keep it on the road. The worst effect this will have is on my children as we will struggle to make ends meet.

"The thought of losing my home that I have worked so hard for terrifies me. I feel it is ironic that a charity that started with a vision to protect children who I have been loyal to is going to have an adverse effect on my own children.

"I would lose £4189 yearly and £349 per month. I presently live with my partner and I have two children, a daughter and an infant son.

In preparation for these cuts. I have cancelled many Direct Debits, restricted food shopping etc. I reduced planned holiday activities with my family, basically kept my outgoings to a minimal.

"Once these cuts are implemented I will be forced to sell our home and I don't know where I will live, my family has no room in their homes, I won't be able to buy another house and Housing Associations have long waiting lists. My family and I will be homeless."

# SAVE THE ACCORD DEMO AND RALLY

by Ann Lynch

**THE** bus driver said it “wid be pelting with rain” on Saturday till about 3 o’clock, but the weather forecast predicted glorious sunshine.

With the brolly in bag, I set off doon the toon, and up to Parkhead, musing how very right bus-drivers can be.

And there was the Demo. Over 500 marched and sang all the way through the east end of Glasgow and back to The Forge shopping centre.

Then the sun came out!!

The Accord Centre in the east end of Glasgow, has served children and young adults with learning and physical disabilities for over 100 years.

With the Commonwealth games coming to Glasgow in



2014, Glasgow City Council informed the carers of the Accord Centre, that the Centre would be bulldozed sometime in September, to make way for a bus park.

With hardly an ounce of consultation, the Council then instructed the staff, carers, users and bus drivers to prepare to be removed to the Banbury Centre in Dalmarnock.

Good old democracy eh.

Three of the carers

whose children attend the Accord, asked for meetings with the Council, to negotiate a better deal.

With the Council refusing to budge, the three women, Grace, Helen and Mary McArthur, made a visit to the occupied Heatherington Research Club at Glasgow Uni, to ask the students to help them.

The community campaign to Save the Accord, then widened to encompass local trades

unions, including PCS, Unite, Unison, and other community campaigners, like Margaret Jaconnelli who was evicted by the Council to make way for the Commonwealth Games.

The Coalition of Resistance which was initiated in June of this year, invited the carers and the users of the Accord to attend there launch at the STUC, 100 per cent support was given by COR, to support the campaign by providing leaflets and setting up stalls to highlight there cause.

A demo was called on 4 July at Parkhead Forge which attracted 150 people, whose rallying call was Save the Accord.

Meanwhile Glasgow City Council, advised the staff and carers to prepare to move to the Banbury Centre and NOT to talk to the Campaigners.

Due to the anger this generated, the women campaigners, decided to have another Demo and Rally, to take this issue right into the East End community and further.

A marvellous demonstration and rally took place last Saturday 27 August, with The Sheboom drummers leading the way through the east end to the sound of chants, songs, speeches, whistles, dancing and big waves from the local shopkeepers and cars tooting as they drove past.

SNP, have shown some support, however Salmonds promise to

send a ‘senior official’ to speak at the Rally, never materialised. Dave Moxham (Depute STUC) attended and vowed 100 per cent support for the Accord, as did the PCS, Unite, Unison and the Green Party.

SSP and SSY members have provided solidarity, leafleting, stalls and have helped to spread the word. The International Socialist Grouping and COR have been a source of inspiration to the Campaigners.

But the women fought the fight. And they remain even more determined than ever, and will not take NO for an answer.

Mary McArthur, campaigner and mother of one of the Service Users, said:

”Due to the behaviour of the Council, I’m afraid to ask my other weans, to take care of my lassie when I die, but I don’t want to condemn them to a life of fighting. The Council have treated us appallingly.

“We are sick of the broken promises. Is a car park worth more than the lives of us and our disabled children.

“The Commonwealth Games will be in Glasgow for just 11 days, then the fuss will be over, and our lives will be totally disrupted”

Shame on you Glasgow City Council. Shame.

These women will NOT take No for an answer. Listen with both ears. And listen clearly.

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# PUBLIC SERVICES: THERE IS NO MONEY FOR THEM, OR IS THERE?

by *Ralph Blake*

WE are told that what lies behind Cameron and Clegg's £80billion (one billion is 1,000,000,000) of cuts and £30billion of tax rises that we face over the next three years is the fact that the money is not there to support our public services and spending? We are running up a huge debt and annual deficit because of our carefree spending habits and now we need to tighten our belts. Is this really the case?

Over the ten years prior to the outbreak of the credit crisis in August 2007 our annual deficit between what we brought collected in taxes and what we spent was running at about £45billion a year. Our total public debt was less than £500billion and it had taken ten years to August 2007 to double.

In just three years since August 2007 our public debt has doubled again to over a £1,000billion (a trillion) and the annual deficit ballooned to up to £170billion a year.

Why did this happen?

Well, we directly put £180billion into bailing out the financial system of which we will only every get back £65billion (this is the value of our shares in Lloyd's TSB Bank of Scotland and RBS which is currently worth just £30billion!).

We put up another £45billion in the form of subsidies to stop a deep recession turning into a depression. We lost another £145billion through declines in tax revenues and increases in welfare spending as we experienced the deepest recession since the 1930s.

The UK economy lost from its peak 5.7 per cent of its value



at the bottom of the recession in 2010. Unlike most other major developed economies that have regained by now nearly all their lost wealth UK has only regained 2 per cent of its loss.

The deficit that the government forecast for 2011/2011 was to come in at £122 billion but now looks set to be around £150billion as their cuts and a global slowdown sees in 2011 the UK economy stagnating at almost zero growth when they initially forecast over 2 per cent growth.

But despite all this there is still plenty of money sloshing around Britain that means there should be no need for cuts or tax rises for the majority of us.

Unlike in country's such as the USA and France where sections of the wealthy and rich and parliamentary parties have raised the option of the rich and wealthy paying more tax to help these countries as whole there is a deathly silence on the subject in the UK.

Even multi billion business people and entertainers such as Warren Buffet and Barbara Striesland and the head of the L'Oreal family in France have said they would not mind doubling the taxes they paid to help provide public services

and pensions.

In the UK for example just the richest 1,000 people have over £400billion in wealth that is not taxed as income. An annual 5 per cent rich tax on unearned wealth on the richest 10,000 people in the UK would raise £40billion a year.

Every year the wealthiest 20 per cent of households earn 16 times the income of the poorest 20 per cent of households. Since 1979 the top level of tax has been cut from 83 per cent to 40 per cent.

Reintroducing a progressive income tax where the rate of tax you pay increases the more you earn would raise a further £30billion a year. A similar local income tax to fund local services would generate £20billion a year.

The UK has just reduced corporate taxes to 26 per cent with further tax cuts to 24 per cent planned. This will see corporate tax cut in half since it was introduced in 1965. This is to motivate enterprise and investment. But all the studies show that cuts like this make no difference and reduce the national income for public expenditure.

The driving force for investment is the rate of profit on pre-tax profits. In the US a

major financial firm committed to increasing its workforce in New York by 500 people and saw its corporate tax rate reduced to 33.3 per cent in return - still way above the rate we currently have.

These are the types of incentives we need in the UK where creating jobs and delivering more personal tax revenues is rewarded with a reasonable tax rate. Moving to such a system in the UK would generate an extra £25billion a year to public spending.

One of the most successful countries in Europe is Norway because it □

captured a large portion of it oil wealth rather handing it over to Oil multinationals. North Sea oil is generating profits of £50billion a year of which only £12billion is going to the public purses. Taking the industry under public control and ownership would generate an extra £38billion a year for public spending.

Finally a great amount of personal and corporate tax is escaping via tax avoidance schemes. There are a range of estimates as to how much this is worth. But using official estimates a conservative £20billion a year of extra tax could be collected by closing these schemes.

In total here we have generated £173billion extra tax per year which is far in excess of the coalition's austerity proposals. We could have no cuts, no VAT tax rises and no tax rises on middle earners and still have money left over to create jobs for young and old alike.

Who said there was no money?

# REMEMBERING VIV BLANCHARD

## OBITUARY

Viv Blanchard  
1950-2011

by Sandra Dawson,  
Edinburgh South branch

ON the 5th of August the SSP lost one of its founder members and most loyal supporters when Viv Blanchard died at the age of 61 in her house at Linlithgow.

Viv and her brother Victor were born and went to school in London. Viv decided to become a nurse and started her training at Moorfield Hospital, moving on to Birmingham and Edinburgh, eventually becoming a midwife.

She met her husband Ian Garioch a social worker and teacher in Edinburgh and they married in 1972 down in London. A year later their only and much loved child Naomi was born. Unfortunately Viv experienced severe post-natal depression which was the onset of her bi-polar mental illness that was to plague her for the rest of her life. In the mid 1980's her marriage to Ian came to an end and he moved to Greece with his new partner while Viv remained in Edinburgh

In 1990 the first of her two grandsons Lewis was born followed later by Owen. Viv loved these boys to bits and looked after them regularly while Naomi finished her education and eventually graduated from the Edinburgh College of Art which made Viv very proud

Viv met her next partner John Donaldson over 20 years ago at the Unemployed



Worker's Centre in Broughton Street before it was closed down and they were together until 3 years ago when Viv gave up her house to her daughter and moved down to Cheshire to be with her elderly parents. Unfortunately her father died a year or so later and sadly just five weeks before Viv's own death her mother died in hospital after a heart attack.

Viv described herself as an Anarchist and Pagan and had her own often outspoken views on people, society, religion and politics. Her political persuasions emerged very early on when she went to Crete aged just fourteen to deliver a cheque to aid the people impoverished under the Junta. Where the cheque came from and who she went with remains a mystery. The family she stayed with went on to become great friends and she eventually formed a relationship with one of them, Dimitri, who was later imprisoned for his political beliefs. Even after her marriage to Ian and the birth of Naomi they continued to visit this family in Crete.

I met Viv 21 years ago after moving to Edinburgh

and joining the local Anti-Poll Tax Group. We then went on to become members of the Scottish Socialist Alliance and eventually the SSP when it was formed. We went together on many marches, demos and pickets and did flyposting and leafleting around the Marchmont tenements. Viv always complained that

leafleting the tenements gave her "Leafleter's Knee" - not good for Revolutionary Grannies as she called us!

Viv also enjoyed gardening very much and she and John eventually got an allotment.

Digging and riddling was very much Viv's forte, apart from growing the vegetables which she did not seem to eat very many of - the growing of them was the thing!

When bad weather kept her indoors her other love was crossword puzzles. She completed crosswords that most people would never attempt - for example the double Times crosswords.

In between her bad spells when John did his best to keep her out of the Royal Edinburgh there were some great times. She was a loving and generous hearted friend to all who knew her. Her very many close friends will find a great hole in their lives now that she is not with us. We won't see her like again.

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# WHERE NOW FOR LIBYA?

by Bill Bonnar

**REVOLUTION** is an evocative word. It implies the overthrow of one socio-economic system and the government it produces and its replacement with a radically new system and government.

It also implies the transformation of society for the better. The question therefore has to be asked. What kind of revolution is it that first requires a coalition of imperialist powers to use their military might to smash an existing regime into smithereens in order to allow 'revolutionary forces' to take power?

Yet this is precisely what has happened in Libya. Make no mistake. Whatever, the motivation, hopes and aspirations of the rebels; this was a victory organised, financed and supported by Nato and almost completely dependent on Nato airpower. Even last week's storming of Gaddafi's compound by rebels was only made possible after it was effectively destroyed by Nato bombers.

We have never had any illusions about the Gaddafi regime. It was repressive and corrupt and long passed its sell by date. Whatever its progressive beginnings it had degenerated into a self-serving elite.

We should also have no illusions about the rebel forces. While many are no doubt motivated by the progressive example of the Arab Spring and want to build a united, democratic Libya many others, including probably the hard core of fighters, have been motivated by tribal or religious based hostility to the former regime or have defected from that regime for opportunist reasons.



For these forces one wonders how progressive their vision of a future Libya will be.

And we should have no illusions either about western motivation for their involvement in this conflict. For most of the past 40 years their aim has been the removal of the Gaddafi regime, its replacement with a compliant pro-western government and to gain strategic control over Libyan oil.

This strategy changed in the first decade of this century when it became clear that the regime was prepared to accommodate itself to western interests with countries like Britain bending over backwards to do business with Gaddafi.

This included a £100million pound arms deal including weapons designed for internal repression. The rebellion in the east of the country in February forced the West into making a choice and to return to their original strategy.

The aim is a dependant pro-western regime in Tripoli which will impose order and hand over the country's oil. The problem they face might be that the rebels who actually did most of the fighting on the ground may prove to be less

compliant.

Of particular relevance for Scotland is the fate of Abdul al Megrahi; convicted by a Scottish court in the Hague for the Lockerbie bombing and subsequently released back to Libya on compassionate grounds. Few people now doubt that Megrahi was innocent and that the case against him was a carefully constructed fiction.

By extension, if Megrahi is innocent then the case for Libyan involvement in the atrocity effectively collapses. There is no doubt that the decision to release him was taken, at least in part, to prevent his appeal from taking place. This would almost certainly have found in his favour and resulted in his release.

The subsequent fallout would so discredit the British and American governments and the Scottish legal system that a damaging public enquiry would have been inevitable. The American government, in particular, will now want Megrahi dead although not before their new found allies have found 'conclusive evidence' of his guilt.

In April, the African Union, in trying to broker a peace deal,

warned of a catastrophe facing Libya. They raised the possibility years of conflict between rival groups including now former elements of the old regime against the new government and tribal and regional conflicts.

They warned of economic collapse in the country which hitherto had the highest living standards in Africa and the possibility of never ending western intervention either by necessity or design. That scenario is now a lot closer.

Most of the rebel forces and the coalition which makes up the new government represent a variety of regional, tribal and religious interests and will demand that these interests be accommodated in the new state.

For the Left our responsibility is to support the democratic and progressive elements which have emerged in the country whose aim is to secure a united, democratic and progressive Libya and to oppose the very powerful reactionary forces which have arisen during this conflict.

Specifically it is to call for an end to western intervention and to expose it for what it is; an imperialist intervention to serve imperialist aims.

# SAY NO TO THE RACIST SDL!



**THE** racist Scottish Defence League are threatening to spread their bile in Edinburgh on 10 September.

They initially applied to Edinburgh Council to march through the streets of the capital. This was rejected by the council, however the SDL have no declared they will be holding a "static"

demo in the city instead (this translates as a bunch of drunken idiots standing in one place being racist).

A counter demonstration has been called against the SDL and the vile racist Islamophobia that they try to spread.

The last time the SDL tried to march in Edinburgh they were sent away with

their tails between their leg like the rats they are.

Again people from various walks of Scottish life will be gathering together to tell these racist that their brand of bigotry and hatred are not welcome on the streets of Scotland.

¡No Pasarán!



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Fill in this form and send to: SSP, Suite 370, 4th Floor, 93 Hope St, Glasgow, G2 6LD

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