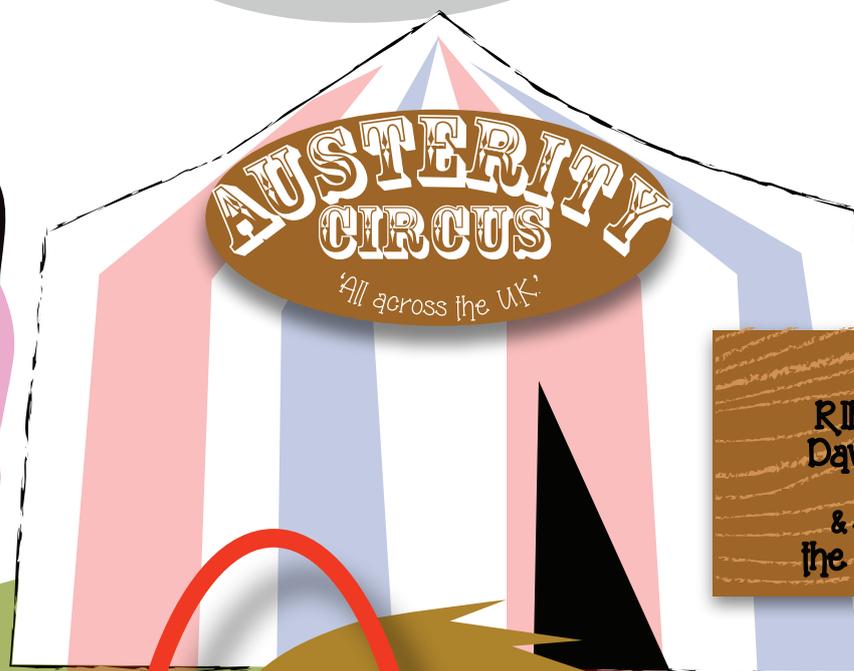


# Scottish **Left** Review

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STARRING  
RINGMASTER  
David Cameron  
& SCOTLAND  
the NOT-so-brave



'Good kitty... now it's time to start jumping through hoops...'

# Scottish Left Review

Issue 83 October 2014

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## Comment - T

The aftermath of the independence has confounded conventional political wisdom. Take the nostrum that 'a rising tide lifts all boats'. The historic popular engagement (judged not just by the voter turnout but also by the tens of thousands campaigning and attending public meetings on politics) has been the tide. But the occupants of all the risen boats don't all now look the same. Examine their faces – the victors don't look particularly happy while the vanquished look more optimistic than you'd ordinarily expect.

Labour has suffered significant collateral damage – something approaching hatred towards it by many (especially in the four majority 'yes' regions and its former heartland of the west of Scotland) and no doubt many resignations too. The SNP has enjoyed by far the most unprecedented growth of any modern political party on these isles in such a short space of time, more than doubling its size in less than a week after the referendum. The Greens and the SSP have also recorded massive growth. More widely, the others parts of the pro-independence milieu (like the Radical Independence Campaign and Women for Independence) have not shut up shop and returned to other pastimes. Not only has the dynamic been defiance of the 45% but also the unravelling of the unionist parties' enhanced devolution vow.

Where does this leave the left? The Red Paper Collective and Socialism First were the mainstays of the left arguing against independence. Their motto was 'don't paint nationalism red'. Unless they are keeping their light under the bushel, they seem to be no stronger than they were before the referendum. The sea they swim in is a smaller one now as Scottish Labour Party membership is in huge decline and they have no King Canute powers to turn its tide towards accepting neo-liberalism. Labour's late in the day promises that voting 'no' was the road to social justice – especially from the big Westminster beasts and not our own parliament's pygmies' – look increasingly hollow after Ed Ball's promise at Labour's conference of new no spending through borrowing (or increases in personal and corporation tax). And that was long after Johann Lamont's 'we can't carry on living in a something for nothing society'

# The Aftermath of the referendum

contribution. Despite valiant efforts by Unite, austerity-lite will greet us if Labour wins in 2015.

Analytically, so far so good? But what of the opposition, especially the SNP? It has to take account of the effect that

## The SNP did not provide enough hope to overcome the fear.

the pendulum in the political process has swung back towards the politicians after 'the people have spoken'. We've been here before – outrage and defiance against the result. Remember Scotland United in 1992? Up like a rocket and down like a stick would be the confirmation of a political nostrum in its case. It's not just that this happen in Scotland. Recall the fate of the likes Ya Basta! in Italy in the midst of the alter-globalisation movement of the early 2000s. The one counter-example is the rise of Podemos ('We can') in Spain – a movement emanating from the Indignados, Izquierda Anticapitalista and Izquierda Unida that has become a party (or added a party to its portfolio) and made a breakthrough by gaining 5 MEPS and 125,000 members. It was only founded in January 2014. It looks like it will avoid the trajectory of the Five Star movement in Italy led by Beppe Grillo. Can a Scottish Podemos emerge out of the fractured pro-independence left in Scotland?

Political parties can organise around elections such as the forthcoming 2015 and 2016 ones. They can even try to make them into *de facto* referenda. But the challenge for movements is a different one entirely. They measure success in different terms. So where is their organising focus now and what counts as success? And was the 'movement' for independence actually a movement (as so commonly asserted)? Over a longer period of time, there will undoubtedly be

a demobilisation of what passed for the independence movement. You only have to remember what happened to Obama's 'Yes we can' bandwagon in 2008. Clearly, many have chosen to join the SNP but that is a fraction of the 1.6m that voted 'yes' and the many tens of thousands that engaged more actively in politics.

But that demobilisation questions what movements are – can genuine social movements be so directly generated from above and exist for such short periods of time? Questions of democracy are in the ascendancy but they cannot trump questions of the importance of social democracy and social justice in the majority of citizens' minds. Who will step up to the plate to stop the cuts? Devolution is a 'dented shield' operation and the SNP's position is to stop things getting worse rather than reverse and return back in time to something far superior. This means that any sense of an independence movement transmogrifying into a mobilised anti-austerity alliance will be sorely tested (even though the 'yes' vote was primarily an impulse for social change not nationalist separation).

The fault line of class has to emerge. It will be both divisive and unifying - both weakening and strengthening. The SNP is a cross-class left of centre party. It will be more left wing under Nicola Sturgeon. But the dull reality of its neo-liberal economic perspective will still trump its social justice instinct. This will be played out over the issues of whether to use the Scottish Parliament's existing and future tax varying powers.

The SNP did not provide enough hope to overcome the fear. The same cannot be said of the Radical Independence Campaign and the Commonweal. But both are not class-orientated either with their respective, and rather populist, 'Britain is for the rich – Scotland can be ours' and 'All of us first' platforms. The referendum has unleashed a battle between change and continuity where we are between something started and something not yet ended. It will continue for some time to come.

Interesting times, indeed but we must go beyond this. The Scottish Left Review will continue to be a forum for the expounding of different perspectives and arguments on the left as it has been since

it was established in 2000 by Jimmy Reid. This edition - and the issues contained herein - is no different if, nonetheless, considerably more important than before. Contributors were asked to explain the results in their view and map out where to go next in terms of the left. In the not-too-distant future, there will be a time for talking and debating to take something of a backseat to political reconfiguration and collective action. Otherwise a window of opportunity will close, and we will experience a backward revolution – a 360 degree return to where we don't want to be, namely, another wrecking, neo-liberal Tory government whose foundations are supported by popular demoralisation and disillusionment.

- *We would very much welcome any responses – by way of letters of up to 400 words - to this editorial and the articles in this issue. They will be included in the next issue so please send them in by Friday 31 October. The email address is [G.Gall@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:G.Gall@bradford.ac.uk)*
- *Along with the chair of the editorial board, Bob Thomson, we would like to record our thanks to Robin McAlpine for all his effort, energy and ideas in editing and producing Scottish Left Review between 2001 and the last issue (82). Robin has stood down in order to concentrate upon the Commonweal. We wish him and the Commonweal well in their endeavours.*
- *Finally, in the New Year, Scottish Left Review Press – the sister to this magazine – will begin the work to put together a new and revised third edition of the consistently popular *Is there a Scottish road to socialism?* edited book. The first was published in 2007 and the second in 2013.*

# Not Down and Not Out

Nicola Sturgeon locates the reasons to be cheerful for those in favour of independence despite the referendum result

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Macduff asks: 'Stand Scotland where it did?' And Ross answers: 'Alas, poor country! Almost afraid to know itself.' Despite the referendum delivering a 'No', Scotland does not stand in the same place as it did before the vote. We have moved forward, and must continue doing so. There is a real sense - and not just on the side of those of us who voted 'Yes' - that Westminster is obligated to take its cue for more powers from what people in Scotland want. The word 'devolution' is no longer adequate, for that describes a process of handing down carefully circumscribed powers from on-high to a relatively passive people.

Scotland is now more politically engaged and assertive than at any stage of the democratic era. For a few remarkable weeks, culminating in the entire Westminster establishment abandoning business and upping sticks to pay a panic visit to Scotland, the desires of what people in Scotland want - whether independence or substantial more powers - set the agenda. There is no going back - and much as they might have wanted to, Whitehall politicians and mandarins cannot put us back in a devolved box.

Even better, the level of popular involvement and debate sparked by the referendum means that I believe this nation knows itself better than ever. Our strengths and weaknesses, virtues and faults, were played out in the full glare of national and international publicity. The picture that emerged may not have been perfect - and the intolerance of the tiny minority on both sides must be acknowledged and addressed - but we did emerge with huge credit at home and abroad with much to be proud of in the way we conducted ourselves in this biggest democratic exercise in Scotland's history.

Fear from the self-proclaimed 'Project Fear' undoubtedly played a role in determining the outcome, but I believe that the referendum has marked the high tide in this factor deciding how our nation should be governed. From here-on-in, regardless of the referendum outcome, there is a new self-confidence in the land demanding powers for a purpose - the ability to create more jobs

and tackle the gross inequality that scars our country. That is the project which all of Scotland is now focused on. But in looking forward, it is always instructive to revisit the past and look for lessons.

Let me make a confession. While I was never complacent, I did believe up until polls closed that 'Yes' would win. My principal reason for this was that everywhere I went I detected a hunger for change - a belief that we could manage the resources of Scotland far better and more fairly than the Tories are doing, or than any Westminster government ever can.

This faith in the abilities of the people of Scotland - and desire to use the full levers of power to build a fairer society - was strong enough to deliver a 'Yes' vote. The countless canvassing sessions and public meetings I did in every corner of the country, particularly as we neared polling day, convinced me of that. I suspect that the other side felt it too, which explains why Westminster threatened us with the proverbial Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse should we have the temerity to exercise our democratic right to independence.

I was amused to see Ed Miliband say recently that 'the deck is stacked' in favour of those who have all the power in society - seemingly oblivious to the fact that in the referendum Labour chose to side with the Tories and the establishment to keep political and economic power in the hands of those who already have it.

People soaked up and discounted a huge amount of the scaremongering because the prize of independence and what it could bring was so valuable - job creating powers, an end to austerity levels of public spending, transformative childcare, protecting our NHS in a written constitution, and ridding Scotland of Trident. But in the end we have to accept that threats of higher supermarket prices and business relocation - empty and orchestrated from Downing Street though they were - diverted attention and undermined confidence. In the circumstances, achieving 45 per cent and 1.6 million votes for an independent Scotland was remarkable, and in my opinion will be judged in days to come as the moment

which determined that independence was a question of 'when, not if'.

I believe that there is a strong relationship between the extent of the powers we wield in the Scottish Parliament, and people's confidence in our abilities to succeed as an independent country. Indeed, that is one reason why Westminster always sought, first, to refuse Scottish self-government, and then to minimise its scope, particularly in the spheres of financial, economic and welfare powers. Put simply, the more responsibilities we can demonstrate Scotland is capable of successfully discharging - and the more these are used to build a fairer country and more economic opportunity for all - the less people will heed the siren voices claiming that to go further would cause the sky to fall in.

In 1979, when there was no modern, democratic experience of Scottish self-government at all, a majority could barely be mustered for a modest measure of devolution. In 2014, after 15 years of a successful Scottish Parliament, we came within 5 per cent of achieving a majority for independence. Therefore, the last card played by the Westminster parties to achieve a No vote - the promise of 'extensive new powers' - may in time turn out to be a trump card for building confidence in independence. These new powers cannot simply be what we have now with a few add-ons.

We will hold the Unionist parties to their vow - which Gordon Brown said within two years would be 'as close to a federal state' as is possible in the UK, and 'a modern form of Scottish Home Rule'. Additional powers which answer to the description of either Home Rule or federalism require both a quantitative and qualitative enhancement of Scottish self-government, especially in the core areas of finance, the economy and welfare. These were, of course, the very areas where the 'No' campaign depicted doom and gloom if decisions were taken at Holyrood rather than Westminster. However, squaring that circle is Westminster's difficulty - Scotland's opportunity lies in gaining the powers we were promised in return for a 'No' vote, and ensuring that we use them wisely for the benefit of the commonweal.

If that is what transpires - and unless it is then the vow to the 55 per cent who voted 'No', as well as the 45 per cent who voted Yes, will have been broken - then Scotland will be self-governing to an extent which would render a future 'Project Fear' attack on the implications of independence risible. So while the referendum result did not go our way, these are still good times

for Scotland. We have an electorate that is engaged in the democratic process as never before, and people formerly of both the 'Yes' and 'No' camps finding common ground and coming together to claim our rights from Westminster. This can and should be a unifying process for Scotland, after what was inevitably a divisive referendum, and I will do everything I can to make it so. The prize is social and

economic gains for hard-working people - and progress for Scotland. For me, that is what the political process is all about.

*Nicola Sturgeon MSP is Deputy First Minister of Scotland*

## Unions continue to question the Union

Stephen Smellie argues unions are predisposed to progressive ends and this presents opportunities

The referendum presented trade unions with challenges and opportunities. Those unions who, with varying degrees of consultation with their Scottish members, responded to the challenge and opted to support the 'No' campaign, and some the Better Together campaign itself, failed to take the opportunity. Thankfully these were a minority of unions.

Those unions, like UNISON, Unite, PCS, and as well as the STUC, who grasped the opportunity to engage in a discussion with their members on the kind of Scotland they wanted to see and then to influence the debate on how best to achieve this, managed to raise the aspirations of their members and to shift the referendum debate towards a trade union agenda of social justice and a fair society. The Yes campaign moved to a more social justice stance so that a contact of mine in Ontario has described it as a 'referendum on inequality'. This explains why so many trade union activists, an overwhelming majority in my experience, voted 'yes'.

Unfortunately, the response from Better Together, and even those who sought to distance themselves from Better Together on the 'No' side, was less positive as they continued to rely upon a wholly negative message, failing to raise aspirations of how things could get 'Better' and relying on a message that things would get worse with a 'yes' vote. The consequences for Labour we wait to see. However when Labour, and those trade unions that supported 'No', spend so much time and energy seeking to suppress rather than raise expectations the likelihood is that they will find support drifting away.

On the 'Yes' side emerged a vibrant and robust energised support seeking

independence as a way to get rid of Trident, protect the NHS, free personal care and free higher education, or just generally to move in the direction of a more fair and more just society. It was a positive, enthusiastic and progressive movement. The 'No' side raised fears about pensions, prices and pounds but were never able to answer the \$64m question, namely, 'If we are to be Better Together, why are we not better now?'. As trade unions we seek to raise aspirations and encourage members to fight for a fairer workplace, community and society. Of course, trade unionists were therefore more attracted to 'Yes' than 'No'.

In the week after the result we have had fascist loyalists causing havoc on the streets of Glasgow, Labour committing to cutting Child Benefit and to austerity, the Tories and others demanding Barnett is replaced and Miliband supporting Cameron's bloodlust in another war in the middle east. In addition, we have seen thousands joining 'Yes' supporting parties whilst the number of Labour members resigning must be significant.

Trade unions are again faced with challenges and opportunities. We should respond to the promise of new powers by reminding everyone that it is not what powers you want but what you want to do with the new powers that really and actually counts. A transfer of responsibilities without the powers to change is of no great benefit. A Scottish Parliament more responsible for implementing austerity is still implementing austerity. We want powers that allow a Scottish Parliament to take a different direction, namely, to develop our economy and workforce rather than destroying and impoverishing it.

Therefore, simply demanding delivery of last gasp pledges is not enough. We

should question whether we are given the kind of powers we want, that is, powers to create a fairer and more equal society. So this means we need have economic powers to shape the economy and the labour market, labour and health and safety laws, an ability to restructure our tax base, amongst others.

The opportunity that presents itself to the trade unions is to try to find a way to engage with the vibrant and energised sections of the community who have demonstrated they wish to build a fairer society. These are the kind of people who we want in our ranks, to help us with our campaigns and to become our future leaders. In some ways, the trade unions are ideally placed to make the best of this opportunity. The issues that motivated people, saving the NHS, opposing TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership), greater democracy, a greener and more equal society are also our issues and none of them can be advanced without the support of trade unions.

Trade unions should seek discussions with the young activists in the local Yes campaigns, and the Radical Independence Campaign supporters. The issues that motivated them to believe independence was an answer are still there and if they wish to build a campaign against TTIP or Trident or for greener communities the trade union movement should be with them, supporting them and acting with them. The 'No' vote was a disappointment and a missed opportunity but what we are left with is tremendously positive circumstances. Join a trade union, get active -fight for a fairer and more just future.

*Stephen Smellie is a senior and longstanding public sector trade union activist.*

# Independence Deferred

Colin Fox argues independence has been merely deferred and delayed but cannot be evaded

Scotland is a country like no other today and has been for months. The level of political engagement in the independence referendum has been absolutely extraordinary and with 50,000 people applying to join the three independence parties in its immediate aftermath that engagement looks like continuing for some time to come.

One measure of how close the independence campaign came to winning on 18 September can be gleaned from the fact no one arriving at the Royal Highland Showground in Edinburgh for the count quite knew what the result was going to be. The outcome was just 'too close to call' agreed the pollsters and analysts alike.

For those of us expected to give media interviews and provide immediate reaction to the results, it meant having two sets of remarks stuffed into our inside pockets. The official 'Yes Scotland' line I received from CEO Blair Jenkins at 10pm was that 'things had gone very well for us and the high turnout, expected to be in excess of 80%, favoured 'Yes' as it signified unprecedented participation by those who did not normally vote and we fully expect to win'.

There were no exit polls produced by the TV stations but on entering the count we learned YouGov had forecast a '54:46 victory for 'No'. This news put an early damper on the mood of Yes activists gathered to oversee the count. Our mood darkened further watching substantial numbers of 'No' votes pour out of ballot boxes from across the capital. And SNP insiders, in touch with 'number crunchers' around the country, alerted us to similar reports from elsewhere.

And yet the massive sigh of relief exhaled by the British ruling classes on Friday morning reflected just how close Scotland had come to independence. They feared a 'Yes' vote and threw everything at us in the last ten days of the campaign. They realised they were going to lose in Glasgow, Dundee, North Lanarkshire and West Dumbartonshire (as they did). They also knew the votes in Inverclyde and in North Ayrshire were on a knife-edge.

The Queen is said to have 'purred' with relief when she heard the result –

even though she is supposed to stay out of partisan political debates. Charged with responsibility for saving her United Kingdom, the Scottish Labour Party declared it 'the most successful political union in history.' Their victory was hailed as their 'greatest achievement'. In private they admitted their campaign was a shambles.

So why did 'No' win? In part, it was because the Better Together campaign managed to cobble together a last minute deal to sway voters whose preference was for 'Devo Max' rather than independence, promising unspecified extra powers for Holyrood over tax raising and welfare. They focused, after both a YouGov poll and internal polling suggested 'Yes' was in the lead, on persuading an elderly, conservative and timid majority that Scotland is subsidised by the rest of the UK and that their pensions were at risk, not from George Osborne's 'triple whammy' – of work longer, pay in more and expect less back - but because Scotland was apparently too poor to guarantee such payments under Independence. They also insisted Scotland's oil was worth little and was about to run out. They argued we would not be able to use the pound and that our economy would be vulnerable to international speculators in the financial markets. They insisted we were safer as part of a warmongering UK machine and promised the NHS in Scotland was safe from privatisation. And, they suggested we would be kicked out of the EU if we became independent and depicted Alex Salmond –the elected First Minister - as some kind of a tyrant!

These were the 'No' side's most common arguments.

The pollsters also found Scotland's prosperous middle class at the epicentre of the 'No' vote. Among them Edinburgh's conservative financial sector, Scotland's defence contractors and the wealthy professional classes, all of whom also turned out in unprecedented numbers and voted by a 3:1 margin to 'save the Union'. The contentment and complacency of 'No' voters was, however, in stark contrast to the impatience and vulnerability of the working class and the young who bravely faced down the relentless scare stories and the outrageous

BBC bias. Rejecting Westminster's austerity, its corruption, its neo-liberal economics and its warmongering, xenophobic politics,' Yes' voters represented all that is progressive in modern Scottish politics.

And, there is remarkably little sign of despair or resignation on the 'Yes' side despite the defeat. Rather, there is a widespread optimism that it is only a matter of time before self-determination prevails. The predominant mood is that independence has simply been deferred not defeated. And to illustrate that optimism and determination more than 50,000 people applied to join the three 'Yes' parties in the 5 days after the vote. The SNP recruited the bulk of them. The Greens have also grown substantially. And the Scottish Socialist Party not to be outdone received some 2,500 applications reflecting an unprecedented level of interest, greater than any ever recorded before by a socialist party in these isles. Those applications have come from former Labour voters angry at the role that party played in the referendum campaign and from Yes activists who, as one woman, a new recruit to the SSP in Dunfermline put it to me this week, 'refuses to go back in the box after this'. Makes you wonder what would have happened if there had been a Yes vote!

So where does the independence movement and the left go from here? History will surely record that Yes Scotland's greatest success was not the winning of 45% of the vote (10% higher than independence has ever secured before) on 18 September but rather in building such an enormous grassroots movement. This was the biggest movement of this kind Scotland has ever seen and sustained. By contrast, Better Together was simply not at the races. When it came to the numbers of activists, and their energy, enthusiasm and organisation on the ground, the Yes side won by a mile.

So what tactics does the movement now employ in pursuit of independence? First it is right we accept the result as the democratic will of the people and rule out another referendum in the foreseeable future. However, that is not to suggest independence cannot be raised again in other ways. Jim Sillars, the former SNP deputy leader and a leading voice in the campaign these past two years, argues for example that we should make the 2016 Holyrood contest the 'independence elections' and insist that if the SNP, the SSP and the Greens win an overall

majority that be considered a mandate for Independence.

Second, next year's Westminster general election offers the independence movement the chance to take the fight to Labour. The referendum results in their so-called 'heartlands' show how vulnerable many of its MPs might be to a single independence candidate. Talks are now under way between the three Independence parties about establishing an 'Independence Alliance' to stand

candidates in every seat and confront the inevitable Labour claim that only they 'can defeat the Tories and form a government at Westminster'.

And the 2016 Holyrood elections will in all likelihood see three new features of this debate; the absence of the extra powers promised for Holyrood, the probability of another Tory government at Westminster [despite being rejected again in Scotland] and that government embarking on an 'In/Out' referendum

on Europe. Such a set of circumstances would ignite the independence debate once more. There are, therefore, several reasons to conclude that Scotland's move toward self-determination is not defeated but merely delayed.

*Colin Fox, SSP leader and 'Yes Scotland' Advisory Board member was described by Alex Salmond as one of the 'stars' of the independence campaign, 'earn[ing] the right to be included in 'Team Scotland' (Sunday Herald 7 September 2014).*

## Out with the Old: In with the New?

Allan Grogan looks for new beginnings to return to old values

History may speak of the 2014 referendum as the turning point for Scotland. With a huge turnout to vote, record numbers attending public meetings, discussions on economy, oil and poverty everywhere you went. It is clear that Scotland has once again discovered its political voice. We should take great pride in this despite the result of the referendum. In truth, we ran closer than we could ever have imagined at the beginning of this campaign. Faced against the might of the British Establishment holding a 20 point lead and the mass media against us we were just under 400,000 votes off a historic victory.

But who were the winners and losers? Where did it all go wrong? You would imagine that the 'no' campaign would be celebrating after the 19 September. This is only partly true. For the Conservatives, it gave them a rare win in Scotland and the opportunity to put Ed Milliband on the backfoot with the proposal of devolution for England. For the Lib Dems it gave them ... well a win, something they aren't all that familiar with. What of Labour? They led the campaign, dominated the media side of the 'No' team, they were the face and voice of Better Together. Yet they have been anything but winners in this campaign.

In 2012 when this campaign started the Labour leadership in Scotland decided it would forgo democratic norms of giving their members a vote on how the party would campaign this referendum. In light of this democratic deficit, Labour for Independence was formed. Ironically, had Labour had the vote they would have won in a landslide with only 9% of Labour members planning to vote 'yes' at the time. Without this show of democracy, it allowed for the evolution of Labour for Independence to campaign for the opportunity that independence would bring not only to the people of

Scotland but also an opportunity to see a return to a real Labour Party in Scotland, modern and progressive but beholden to its founding principles.

Instead, a 'no' vote will be seen as an endorsement of the Labour leadership in Scotland and how they defer to their masters at Westminster, namely, promoting right wing policies which have no place in the party of Bevan, Smith, Maxton and Hardie. Perhaps worse have been the actions of the leadership, the 'something for nothing' comments, the lies, and the scare stories. The indelible mark that will forever stain the soul of the Labour Party was seeing Johann Lamont smiling outside Asda after they asserted that food prices would rise in an independent Scotland. What a despicable act; to take pleasure from the notion that the working poor will struggle to put food on the table just because they dared to vote 'yes'. It is little wonder that, thanks in part to Labour for Independence, 40% of Labour voters came out to vote for change by voting 'yes'.

The uncomfortable reality of the party came into full view less than one week later, as it unveiled plans to cut Child Benefit in real terms and begin to backtrack on more powers for Scotland. This is the direction that the party I have supported since I was 8 years old is going in. This is why with a heavy heart I resigned my membership to the party on 23 September. I, along with thousands of others in Scotland, no longer feel Labour represent us, or even its own history. The irony of it all is that with a 'yes' vote we could have seen a return to a real Labour Party which most people would have voted for in Scotland. The party, particularly in this nation, is in deep decline, and I fear it may be permanent.

So if the winners really lost, did the losers really win? Despite not gaining their parties main goal, it would appear the result may have worked in the SNP's favour. Many voters, attached to the

Yes movement have joined the party to maintain that sense of belonging. Irony has been mentioned in this piece, but it is perhaps the ultimate irony that the party who lost the election for Yes, being unable to win their soft voting areas of Angus and Aberdeenshire, walked away with 40,000 new members and counting.

Many within the Yes movement now call on all '45%' to stand behind the SNP to wipe out 'new' Labour. This would be working under the assumption that a Referendum 2 is imminent. The reality is we are looking at a generation before we will have that opportunity again. We need to address the issues of why those in real Labour areas voted 'Yes' and what will unite them. Who will provide a platform for their aspirations? The unfortunate truth for those who will support the SNP as a socially just party in 2015 is that despite the visceral hatred for Labour at the moment, they will push the line of 'us or the Tories,' and win a majority in Scotland in 2015. We need to think beyond this election or the next. We need to present the people of Scotland with a viable alternative to 'new' Labour, one that reflects the needs and aspirations of the working class, whether this be in the form of a new political party or a shift from a current one. We must readdress the balance to provide a home for the many, including myself who feel politically homeless.

In these last 30 months, the left has come together for the first time, united in a common purpose. We can achieve that again. It may be no longer possible to save the soul of the Labour Party but the great history and names within the party will live on. But they live on with those who hold true their ideals and beliefs. Not by having a red membership card. But there is still an opportunity. Perhaps, the left and Scotland, with a little patience can become the winners after all.

*Allan Grogan is the former co-convenor of Labour for Independence*

# Forward to the past and present

Cat Boyd argues the pro-independence left needs to create a new party

For over 700 days, the people of Scotland were hammered by a fear campaign orchestrated by the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and, of course, the Labour Party. If the working class were the only ones to vote in the independence referendum, there would have been a Yes vote on 18 September. In Scotland's poorest areas, all of which are traditional Labour heartlands, the argument for independence to create a socially just Scotland was won. A 'yes' vote became a revolt against the alienation with the British state and the British economy.

All analyses of the referendum result have agreed that there is a linear relationship between unemployment, poverty and a higher 'yes' vote. That relationship is much stronger than, for example, the difference between men and women or between SNP areas and Labour areas. Four out of the six poorest constituencies in Scotland voted 'yes'. The voter turnout was so high because for once, how you voted actually mattered. The referendum proved that when people are given a vote which genuinely makes a difference to their lives and to those around them, they reached out and not only voted but shaped the entire substance of the debate.

Working class people in Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and Dundee are now acutely aware and have made it explicitly clear that Labour does not improve living standards, while the party's commitment to continued austerity has caused its traditional base in Scotland to collapse. For two years, *Better Together* told people in Scotland that we would lose our jobs, homes, pensions, and that the cost of living would rise. Yet, over one and a half million still voted 'yes'; so many in the poorest areas voted 'yes'. In spite of this fear, people had hope.

The real cutting edge of this debate was democracy – focusing on disengagement, disenfranchisement and the so-called 'missing million'. Well, the missing million aren't missing anymore and it is a safe bet to say that they won't be voting for the Labour Party anytime soon. A full 70% of those voting 'yes' ranked what is essentially the principle of "home rule" as their primary reason for their decision.

Gordon Brown whipped up the notion that Scotland can achieve home rule with a 'no' vote. But very quickly, we've seen the cracks appear within the Labour party on this very issue. Labour cannot deliver on this basis. In the same way it cannot deliver on social justice, it cannot deliver democracy for those who have been shut out of the political process for decades.

The movement for change must remain, and in the context of a 'no' vote, we must demand home rule, not the devolution of austerity from Westminster to Holyrood. David Cameron is quickly trying to consolidate Conservative power in Westminster. His promises of devolution mean devolving the axe. There will be no increased revenue intake or new borrowing powers for Scotland. But again, this goes beyond an economic argument – home rule is the notion that people in Scotland can at least make decisions over their domestic affairs.

## there is a generation of young people looking for a political home

For those of us on the left who campaigned for a 'yes' vote, our case for independence was not that it was a vote for a flag but a vote for radical transformation of the lives of ordinary people in Scotland. That is as relevant today as it was on the 18 September. We won the traditional Labour heartlands, and we're not going to give them back to Labour without a fight. The battle for 'Red Clydeside' has only just begun.

Paul Mason in the Guardian on 21 September ('Scotland's young, feisty yes generation has nowhere to go') was right: there is a generation of young people looking for a political home. And there are also thousands of working class 'yes' voters looking for a political home, too: they won't find it in the SNP nor in Labour.

Because, for me, what we need is a further expression of the amazing, youthful energy of the grassroots independence movement. This must be a political expression which captures the

very essence of the fight for democracy that shaped it. None of our existing organisations are capable of doing that, so we need a new radical party. If the left fragments again into its constituent parts, then it will let down all those new activists who have created the most incredible social movement that Scotland has had for decades. And if we want to keep the debate about democracy flourishing in Scotland, as we have seen over the past two years, then we must create a more diverse polity in Scotland with the views of those who want to radical redistribution of wealth and power properly represented, not just in Holyrood but rooted in communities.

To do this we will look for inspiration from home and abroad. We need to learn from the likes of Podemos in Spain who emerged out of the Indignados movement and is currently unseating the Spanish Labour Party all over the country. We need to tap into the old Labour radical traditions of the Independent Labour Party in Scotland who, led by Keir Hardie then James Maxton, had a vision for Scottish home rule to create a socialist Scotland and eradicate poverty and hunger.

Labour has given up the right to its history and now, we will reclaim the best parts of that radical tradition. It was not nationalism, nor Scottish identity, nor certainly the SNP that powered the momentum behind the 'yes' campaign. The truth is that the movement for 'yes' was powered by class politics. And as Labour has turned its back on these ideas, we will challenge them on it in the heartlands, and undoubtedly, we will beat them.

*(This article was first published on Bella Caledonia on 23 September and then on the ISG website on 24 September.)*

*Cat Boyd is a leading activist in the Radical Independence Campaign and an ISG member based in Glasgow. She co-authored the recent book, *Scottish Independence: a Feminist Response*.*

# Social democracy not separatism

Neil Findlay and Tommy Kane argue for a 'real' Labour response to the referendum result

Nearly a week on from the referendum, a picture based on fact, not myth, wishful thinking or conjecture, is emerging. Of course, the most salient fact we knew only a few hours after the polls closed, when in the early hours of 19 September, it became clear that Scotland had decisively rejected the version of independence offered in the Scottish Government's White paper. Never has the popular sovereign been spoken with such authority. From a hugely impressive turnout of c85%, over 2m, 55.3% voted 'No' against 1.6m and 44.7% voting 'Yes'. There has been much soul searching on all sides since. But the long and short is that insufficient numbers were persuaded that independence was in their interest, their families and their wider community.

Despite the resounding result, we've witnessed reactions by many seeking to lay the 'blame' upon others (the BBC, businesses, Labour, Asda, unions who voted 'no') rather than acknowledge the failure of the 'yes' campaign to persuade enough people of the merits of their case. Yet the more noise about fixes, rigged polls, of brainwashed, stupid, spineless and cowardly citizens or of the scared or selfish elderly the more those who voted 'no' feel vindicated.

So just who did vote 'no'? Initially, it was said the young voted 'yes' and the old 'no'. But we now know that only one group, the 25s-39s, voted by a majority for 'yes'. We know that from North to South and East to West, the majority was for 'no', with only four of 32 local authorities voting 'yes'. Women voted 'no', as did the young voted and 22% of SNP voters voted 'no' (with 27% of Labour voters voting 'yes'). Another strong but simplistic narrative suggested the poorest voted 'yes' and the better off 'no'. Well yes, the 4 local authority areas who voted 'yes' are amongst the poorest but it is simply wrong to suggest that only the affluent voted 'no'. Consider the working population and their average earnings and it really does expose this as fanciful. With a working population of just under 2m, 90% of Scots earn less than £44.5k, with 60% earning £25.3k or less. This puts paid to the notion that it was millionaires and bankers that voted 'no' and the working class 'yes'. Those who voted 'no' were in the main ordinary working people.

In this debate the usual rules did not apply. On one side, two of the richest men in Scotland - McColl and Souter - voted 'yes' along with the SWP whilst the Communist Party and the UKIP voted No. The reality is the debate saw political enemies, take similar positions for very different reasons. But whilst people voted 'no' for many reasons, there were some central issues that ultimately cost the 'yes' vote dearly.

## Another campaign feature was the abandonment by the pro-independence left of its capacity to critically analysis the SNP, its record in government and its 'independence' offer.

On the currency, people rejected the proposed currency union, not accepting the central bank of the very country Scotland was seeking to separate from would be given the final say over taxation, spending, regulation, interest rates etc. This was a strange version of independence as it would have seen rUK's chancellor sign off these critical decisions without any political input or scrutiny from Scottish MPs (who would no longer sit at Westminster). This was policy that reeked of focus groups, not political principle. Indeed, Yes Scotland chair, Dennis Canavan and the Greens, SSP and Jim Sillars all rejected it but did all they could to keep quiet about it. The electorate also understood that creating a Scottish currency and building up our own reserves would have involved significant long term pain - something many were not prepared to countenance.

Neither did they want the low wage, low tax economics proposed by the SNP. For all their social democratic talk, the only redistributive policy proposed in

the White Paper was a shift of cash from the poor to the rich in the shape of a 3% corporate tax gift. The repeated references to Scotland following Scandinavian models of social democracy simply did not stand up to scrutiny.

But, of course, nor did people want the status quo - I hope we can all agree the referendum was a vote for change! In the almost 100 meetings, school talks, debates and events that I took part in during the campaign I articulated a 'Vote No' for change message. This is where the common ground between many in the Yes and No camps lies. People have rejected the slavish obedience to the free market and the low taxed, deregulated economy. Social justice and how to create a fairer more just economy and society became one of the key themes. It is my view that a combination of the proposed currency union, EU deficit rules for new states, the need to build credibility with the markets and lenders and the economic uncertainty independence would have created would have created the conditions where turbo charged austerity would have been the first thing to hit Scotland had there been a 'ye' vote.

Throughout the campaign it was repeatedly 'it's not about the SNP' - a position that completely ignores that the only published blueprint for independence was the SNP's and that it would have been that party that would have dominated independence negotiations and writing a new constitution. Salmond stated people were 'voting on the White Paper'. So had it been approved, the nationalists with huge momentum going into the 2016 election would have continued to push the politics of nation, not class, and this would have dominated Scottish politics for the foreseeable future.

Another campaign feature was the abandonment by the pro-independence left of its capacity to critically analysis the SNP, its record in government and its 'independence' offer. Strangely, the SNP gained a reputation for being good at government but this has taken a hit recently, with the referendum result, arguably, being judgment on that as good government is not centralising or undemocratic government. Yet this Scottish Government has curbed and diminished local government, epitomised

by the underfunded council tax freeze (that has contributed to 40,000 job losses and puts the most money into the hands of those with the most expensive houses). Moreover, the SNP has centralised the police and cut thousands of civilian support posts. We now see the routine arming of officers and stop and search at rates higher than those of the Metropolitan Police. We have the Offensive Behaviour at Football Bill which in the main criminalises working class young men and there are plans to end corroboration - a key feature is Scots law. In our colleges, 130,000 places have been cut, disproportionately affecting working class young women, the disabled and adult learners. The NHS is teetering on the brink with a crisis in social care, with waiting times increasing, use of the private sector growing and staff under more pressure than ever. And, we see no progressive policy initiatives to redistribute cash from the rich to the poor. On these issues the pro-independence left has stayed silent. Will it now find its voice? Or will it continue to expend its energies on crying 'freedom' whilst freedom is being trampled on under their very nose?

If we examine the last 100 or so years it has been the UK labour and union movement that has been the vehicle for progressive change, providing the impetus that has transformed the material circumstances of working people. Independence was a trap that would have divided workers and diminished our ability to fight and challenge the power of capital in an economy the Scottish government wanted to make 'the most competitive in Europe'. For competitive, read low pay, deregulation, zero hours etc. The majority of Scottish people critiqued the prospectus on offer, weighed up the evidence and didn't like what they saw.

So there is now an overwhelming consensus that politics in Scotland has to move on but how is this going to happen? Whilst the referendum did a tremendous job in developing political discourse and interest, the nationalism running through the 'Yes' side also brought with division, intolerance and unwillingness to contemplate alternative viewpoints. I can only hope that those 'yes' campaigners who were motivated by social justice return to the politics of class and work for the removal of the Tories next year and for more progressive, redistributive politics and that the recent political sectarianism directed towards Labour is put to one side with as much effort put in next year to get rid of Cameron and Clegg.

From a Labour perspective, the message received and next steps appear obvious. 1.6m were prepared to jump over the cliff in the hope there would be a safe landing. That's quite an indictment on dissatisfaction with the status quo. Political parties can be under no illusion that this was aimed at all of them. Labour must do several things. We must always be the party that represents working people. We must have an organisational response, yes, but more importantly a political response that puts tackling poverty and inequality through redistribution at the heart of our manifesto and core beliefs. We must reject market orthodoxy, develop new public ownership models (most obviously on the railways), invest in public services, commit to full employment and be the party of education and the NHS. We cannot

continue to run away from the question of progressive taxation.

In short, Labour must reclaim the bold radical traditions that created the NHS, welfare state, national minimum wage and Scottish parliament. So while we must ensure sufficient constitutional change occurs, such change has to have a purpose - to serve the interests of our class. Only then will be able to credibly tell those 'no' voters that a 'no' vote was a vote for change and in so doing regain the trust of some of those who voted 'yes'.

*Neil Findlay is a Labour MSP for Lothian and Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Health and Well-being. Tommy Kane is parliamentary researcher to Neil. Both are members of the Red Paper Collective.*

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

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



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General Secretary

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**Kevin Lindsay**  
Scottish Officer

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# More Powers? Yes, but only if you use them – and for progressive ends

Katy Clark suggests the appetite for social change can be satisfied

The result is now known but the referendum fallout looks as if it will be with us for a long time to come. The last few months have divided communities, the labour movement and fundamentally shifted the political landscape. Although many of those who have engaged with the debate were clearly motivated by progressive values, left wing ideas particularly about economics were far from central.

The 'vows' promised by the Westminster party leaders need to be delivered. But constitutional change can only be a vehicle to delivering social justice. There needs to be a far higher degree of honesty about the political failure of Holyrood so far to do what is in its power and a clear message that the delivery of further powers comes with an obligation to use them. If the Parliament does not get the powers it needs to do that we need to be clear what further powers are needed. Up until now there has not been significant enough political will to even re-regulate the buses in Scotland, never mind take on a more radical redistribution of wealth. There is no one making the case for progressive taxation and, indeed, the message from the nationalists has been simply that it is not sensible to have higher rates of tax than the rest of the UK, whether independent or not.

The left needs to argue that a race to the bottom is in no one's interests. Whatever your stance in the referendum, we need to focus on what needs to be done to build council houses, regenerate our manufacturing base, reskill our population, develop the green economy and a serious arms diversification strategy, and promote public ownership.

So what does that mean? Yes it means giving the Scottish Parliament the power to run our railways but more importantly it means planning to bring it back into public ownership and control the moment the legislation is there to make it happen.

It was clear throughout the campaign the levels of frustration and despair caused by austerity economics, the erosion of the welfare state, and the falls in living standards. Yet there was little serious debate in the campaign about how an independent Scotland would take on Austerity Europe,

about the spending restrictions which would be imposed in any currency union or the problems with an independent currency. Austerity is a choice for the UK, it would be far less so for an independent Scotland. The failure of the leadership of the Yes campaign to take on these issues and to have answers to the simple questions being asked of them on the economy must have seriously undermined their ability to succeed.

Ordinary people recognised that what they were being presented with was a wish list of promises with no strategy to pay for them. Where was the money coming from?

## We must work to rebuild bridges and to push issues of class and social justice up the political agenda.

The result is anything but a mandate for the status quo. The major parties have been promised more devolution and it is important to ensure that they deliver on this pledge. However, it would be wrong to focus only on constitutional matters, while ignoring class, poverty, social justice and austerity, which were the major issues throughout the referendum campaign. The task of the left is to ensure that these are central in this post-referendum period and that devolution proposals are centred on achieving social justice.

There will continue to be differences on the left over the issue of independence and devolution. However, it is important that socialists and trade unionists do not focus on only on the matters we disagree on. We must work to rebuild bridges and to push issues of class and social justice up the political agenda. Isolation and infighting will only weaken us at this critical time. Organisations like the People's Assembly against Austerity offer a chance to unite the left and union movement around a common cause and to shift the politics in the run up to the Westminster general election next year.

The greatest success of the referendum has been engagement. Across the country thousands of people have been involved in both the Yes and No campaigns. Meetings, stalls and events have been held in every city, town and village. Thousands of young people have become engaged in politics for the first time. An agenda focused on social justice will encourage them to stay involved.

In my view the result represented a vote for solidarity over separatism. Others, of course, have a different view. But what we can all agree on is the real appetite for real political and social change. To deliver that it is now vital to ensure that issues of class, and social justice are at the top of the agenda in the post-referendum period.

*Katy Clark is (Labour) MP for North Ayrshire and Arran*

# Challenges the left can respond to

John Foster sees hope for the left if adopts the correct strategy to connect with citizens

The referendum result poses big challenges for socialists and all on the left. The SNP's formula for independence was, indeed, rejected and the scale of that rejection was bigger than many, including myself, expected. Yet Labour's working class heartlands did vote 'yes' and the challenge resides in the character of that vote. It came primarily from the poorest, those who have suffered worst from neo-liberal policies. It was a vote that was anti-Tory but at the same time saw opposition in terms of independence. Exploitation was identified with external rule.

The SNP ran a very sophisticated campaign. Its White Paper terms for independence were essentially neo-liberal: EU, sterling, cuts in business taxes, NATO membership and no guarantees on the removal of anti-trade union laws. Not just that. Its timetable for independence provided full reassurance for big (and small) business on delivery. All the key institutions required for neo-liberal continuity would be in place before formal independence. Yet, at the same time, the SNP succeeded in penetrating working class areas in a way they had never done before. 2012 had seen an electoral shift to the SNP but it was quite shallow and was reversed in subsequent local elections.

The referendum was different. It generated a movement. The tactic of flooding working class areas with activists using radical slogans did not necessarily achieve this result. But it did enable pre-existing nationalist sentiment to gain a life of its own and transform a prevailing fatalism into a belief that immediate social and economic change was possible. The cries at one polling station in Govan were 'end Tory rule for ever', 'put Cameron on the dole', 'stop the cuts now' (even though many shouting them came from elsewhere, two from as far away as Wales).

Older voters remained unconvinced and voted predominantly 'no' – a generation politically formed in the 1970s and 1980s who remembered the mass campaigns mobilised by the union movement and even the Labour Party.

But the majority in working class Govan and Glasgow voted 'yes'. This is the challenge. Mass politics were previously anchored, however tenuously, in some form of class perspective. Poverty was seen to be caused by the rich and their grip

on government. Now oppression and exploitation are increasingly identified with external rule. And there is a converse reaction in England where the Tories and UKIP seek to exploit discontents raised by what is seen as special treatment for the Scots.

The class content of politics, already weak before the referendum, is directly threatened. This should be as much a matter of concern for left nationalists as for those who argued for the more traditional left position of home rule.

How to respond? There are two positive features. One is the degree to which opposition to 'Westminster rule' in working class areas is to some extent still phrased in terms of class. It associates exploitation with external government but it's still about class justice. The other is the politicisation of 'no' voters. Two thirds of Labour voters did not vote 'yes'. Some of this was inertia, some distrust of the SNP. But there was also a newly reinforced yearning for class politics – something which found expression at the local mass meetings, attended by hundreds, organised by Working Together and the labour movement campaign. It was this feeling to which Gordon Brown sought to respond in his eve of poll speech.

Miliband's response has been interesting. He picked up the anger at poverty and deprivation and argued that issues of economic and social justice must not be side-lined in the bid to resolve the constitutional issues. This is correct. At the same time, there is a danger in this position. It separates two things that, in terms of class politics, need to be taken together.

Today's political cliché is that there is

a fatal detachment between government and the governed. The clichéd (non-class) solution is to devolve powers 'closer' to the people. Yet lessons from existing devolved governments are not learned. The Scottish Parliament already possesses powers to raise taxes and to take into public ownership and to intervene industrially. But they have never been used. Why? One is the lack of a mass class movement to demand their use. The other, no less important, is the scale of institutional prohibition on anything that infringes neo-liberal, free market process enforced at British and EU level.

Devolving still more formal but unused and unusable powers will lead to even greater disenchantment. The issues of social justice correctly raised by Miliband have to be addressed through regional devolution, national parliaments and federal institutions. This has two clear requirements: a mass movement for class justice, one which the labour movement must lead, and a mass class understanding of how existing state structures, in Britain and the EU, sustain the neo-liberal framework that maximises big business profits at the expense of working people.

This was the original perspective of the STUC for a home rule parliament. It has been reiterated recently in the 2014 Red Paper - a parliament with both the means and the political will to enhance the power of the great majority against that of capital – within a federal structure that has the potential power to facilitate this redistribution and thereby becomes the focus for class mobilisation. And, not just from Scotland.

*John Foster is a member of the Red Paper Collective and a labour historian*



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# Lessons learnt from the referendum

Richard Leonard argues for deep-seated change across the whole of Britain after 18 September

People are right to be angry and right to be crying out for change. The crisis in the global financial markets caused by the richest in society has been used to attack the poorest in society through an austerity programme which for four years has driven up inequality by dismantling the welfare state and cutting public services. Those responsible for the crisis appear to be proceeding with 'business as usual' whilst those who are not see their living standards and quality of life eroded yet further. No wonder some people saw a 'yes' vote in Scotland's referendum as a way out from a social and economic model which is not working. Who wouldn't be seduced by the mirage of no more Tory Governments?

As a trades union, we said all along in the referendum debate that the status quo was not an option. Drastic constitutional change was put forward by some in the Yes campaign as the best means of ushering in that change. Some of the Yes campaign argued a raw nationalism and others were imbibing it without realizing it. But the change that most people demanded was not first and foremost a shift in power from one Parliament to another and from one set of politicians to another. It was, and is, a demand for a shift in power from the elites of politics to the people in the form of a more direct and active democracy. Emergent from the debate too are questions not just on where powers lie, but what it is you intend to do with them, for what purpose and whose interests they will benefit.

So the appeals which we must now insist upon and the hopes that we need to lift are not nationalistic but distinctly democratic socialist ones. Not putting Scotland above all else or an exclusive concern for Scotland and Scotland alone but applying instead universal and cosmopolitan principles. For the Labour Party especially, it means articulating a vision of change not confined to the most deprived areas of Scotland but one which can be embraced by every left behind poverty stricken communities right across the whole of Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland. After all the fundamental decision which the people of Scotland made on the 18 September was that we should continue to share a state not create a separate one. And even regardless of that democratic political

decision, we continue to share a highly integrated economy in which power is centralised and needs to be challenged. We also share ideas, value systems, collective institutions and almost identical experiences of community decline and decay not least in the wake of decades of deindustrialisation. In short, we share a common identity of interest.

## The referendum debate filled the vacuum in the democratic process created by years of political disillusionment

The referendum debate filled the vacuum in the democratic process created by years of political disillusionment, economic alienation and the corrosion of trust. It saw the building of bridges from the realm of ideas to the domain of orthodox politics. To sustain this engagement, and spread it across these shared islands, calls for a simple but timeless message of power to the people, power not just for 15 hours on one day for 4 million people in Scotland but popular power on a continuing basis through a far more participatory democracy for every citizen across the UK. It means at its root challenging the casino economic system which not only brought about the latest financial crisis but the failing economic order which underlies it. If socialism means anything at all, it is the extension of democracy into the economic as well as the political system, transforming the relationship between capital and labour. Tinkering with problems will not work.

Power is not only derived from parliamentary majorities or the ballot box but from the power of ownership and the over accumulation of wealth. So we need a shift in power to working people and their unions in the workplace. Not a repeat of the failed experiment of Directors on Boards as set out in the SNP's *Scotland's Future* White Paper but a newer, much broader industrial

democracy as part of a newer much broader economic democracy.

That demands a redistribution of power and not just wealth from those who own the economy to those who through their hard work and endeavour create the wealth in the economy. It represents a challenge to the over concentration of power in the economic as well the political sphere, so that never again can a country be held to ransom by Ineos' Jim Ratcliffe's of this world.

It means legislating for statutory powers for workers and communities to own enterprises when they are put up for sale, facing asset stripping, a strike of investment or closure by their owners. It means giving working people who through their pension and insurance funds own some of the commanding heights of the economy greater democratic powers over investment managers in the City of London and so to control and hold to account the leviathans of the economy.

It requires us to look to international alternatives to neo-liberalism, to those European national and regional states that have fostered co-operative economies like Mondragon in Spain and Emilia Rogmana in Italy, and to those for whom public and indigenous ownership remain a cornerstone of economic life like France, Germany and the Scandinavian states. People understand that ownership is power so public ownership and economic planning not merely price freezes and better regulation should be back on the public policy agenda.

We also need a renaissance in powers for elected local democracy, to local government and the empowerment of local communities. It means ending the great inequalities of power as well as wealth in our hardest hit communities where feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness and, therefore, despair and abandonment are greatest. It means equal access to power for women as well as men and reawakening an understanding of the primary role of working people in collectively making our own decisions and so shaping our own politics and in turn making our own history.

In communities where worklessness has become a chronic problem it means investing in sustainable local initiatives

instead of solely relying on flagship projects. It means a demand led approach in local labour markets instead of concentrating exclusively on the price and supply of labour. It means the resurgence of community not its decline. It means the principled re-adoption of the goal of meaningful work for all based on local community social, environmental and economic planning. Every community in every part of the country should be asked to identify its social, economic, environmental and cultural needs and link those to employment demand.

The decisive struggle before us is one shared with working people right across this devolved, multinational, unitary state. The labour movement's role is critical in changing the balance of power in society which is after all precisely why it was created by the pioneers as a movement in the first place. That's why its relevance as the agency for change must at this point in history be revitalised. Our common goal is to transfer power and so tackle inequality and injustice at home and abroad in an outward looking vision of change. It is to draw upon

the high level of engagement led off by the Scottish debate whilst casting aside its chauvinistic, intolerant, and base elements. It is to go forward in a spirit of co-operation and shared endeavour to build a better society in a peaceful world on the foundation of a democratic economy and a participatory form of politics.

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## Remember 'class over nation'

Stephen Low argues powers are for a purpose and not an end in themselves

The starting point for any consideration of the referendum campaign and what the left does now has to be an acknowledgement and recognition of a level of political commitment in Scotland that is unprecedented in our history. Two million people went out and voted that Scotland should be part of the UK. Scotland's membership of the UK has been transformed from being the work of a 'parcel o' rogues' in the eighteenth century to being the freely expressed view of a significant majority of Scotland's people in the twenty first.

This should be welcomed by the left. It is at UK level that ownership and control of much of the Scottish economy is exercised and it is there that the most decisive interventions can be made. There is no real surprise as to the decision of the people of Scotland to reject leaving the UK. The pro-independence campaign never developed any credible economic plan or prospect. Opinion polls were absolutely consistent throughout the entirety of the campaign in indicating that at no point did a majority ever accept that proposition that independence would deliver economic improvement. The Yes campaign assertion that Scotland could somehow have a Scandinavian type society on lower than Tory tax rates never convinced people. Nor did it deserve to.

The exemplar of this was surely the currency issue. The Scottish Government was depending on the acquiescence of the rUK for its desired currency union. The proposition, in the words of the STUC, made 'sense for the independent Scotland

[but] it is not at all obvious that it represents 'common sense' for rUK'. The flat denial of this obvious state of affairs by all elements of the Yes campaign went from farce to potential tragedy when the 'no one can stop us using the pound' line was seriously canvassed by the Scottish Government. Much could be said on this but suffice it to say the prospect drew fulsome praise from the Adam Smith Institute. From this point onwards, the model being aspired to wasn't so much Norway as Narnia. It was of a piece with the whole Yes movement. That it could be beaten by so dull and uninspiring a campaign as that run by the No parties says much about how convincing they were.

The 'No' victory wasn't predicated on offering more powers for the Parliament (although support for these rose during the campaign). They were, however, promised and this provides an opportunity for the left. We should fully participate in the process of defining and working towards getting them. In so doing, we must ensure a class perspective is kept to the fore. It isn't, for example, automatically the case that 'more is better' as the nationalists argue. There is, for example, little to be gained for workers in setting off a race to the bottom in business taxation. Whilst more powers for the Scottish Parliament to raise revenue are to be welcomed, the idea of 'full fiscal autonomy' isn't a progressive one. 'All the money raised in Scotland stays in Scotland' is a slogan fit only for an egregious and parochial charity campaign,

not a class conscious left. That money flows from Surrey to Sauchie or Aberdeen to Allerton is of benefit to everyone in the UK. The principles we should be looking to uphold in the disbursement of public money should be ones that prioritise need over nation. The relevant chapters of the *Red Paper on Scotland 2014* outline the benefits and drawbacks of many fiscal and other measures.

If thinking that 'more is better' in relation to devolution is a trap that we should avoid, so is the fallacy of mistaking constitutional for social change. Shouting 'Whadda we want? More powers now. Why do we want them? To go in the cupboard under the sink with all the other powers we don't use' is pretty much what many of the loudest voices in the last week have been doing. Further devolution is of little account if the powers are not going to be used. It is the task of the left in these debates when the devolution of further powers is discussed to change the formulation from 'we could' to 'we will' and, in doing so, persistently raise the issue of why the considerable powers currently exercised in Scotland aren't being put to greater use. Powers for a purpose – not their own sake – should be the guiding maxim of the left going forward. That and a constant awareness that what will really make a difference for working people isn't about constitutional mechanics but about political will.

*Stephen Low is a member of the Labour Party and the Red Paper Collective*

# A close call and a considerable challenge

John Wight writes that 'no' won in spite of itself but that makes it no easier for the pro-independence left to influence the SNP

The telling aspect of the most historic election in UK political history was not the unprecedented 85 percent turnout. Nor was it the achievement of the Yes campaign in mobilising and bringing thousands of people across Scotland into political engagement and activity. It was not even the resignation of SNP leader Alex Salmond the day after the election, which added a Shakespearean quality to what had already been a dramatic period in Scottish history.

The most telling event came in Manchester a couple of days after 18 September at the Labour Party conference, when a coach carrying representatives of Scottish Labour pulled up outside the conference to a rapturous welcome from Harriet Harman and various other Labour MPs and officials. Off the coach came Johann Lamont, Margaret Curran, and Anas Sarwar *et al.* with broad smiles and raised hands, basking in the kind of glory you would normally associate with a football team returning home after winning the World Cup.

Watching this it was clear that Labour in Scotland is as close to a political corpse than it has ever been in the wake of a referendum result which, rather than a victory, was a disaster for Labour, clear proof that the ideological hollowing out it went through during the Blair years has yet to be reversed.

Whereas we witnessed a Yes campaign that was testimony to the potential of a grassroots mobilisation in a mature democracy, the Better Together campaign qualified as one of the most inept and cynical ever waged. None who witnessed it will soon forget the sight of a Tory Prime Minister scurrying up to Scotland from London, accompanied by the leaders of the two mainstream Westminster opposition parties, in a panic stricken attempt to save the Union as the gap narrowed.

That we even got to this point is an indictment of Labour and evidence of the contempt in which it is now held within large swathes of traditional Labour heartlands in Glasgow, Dundee, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire etc. So bad is this political and ideological

malaise that it fell to Respect MP George Galloway to step into the breach and make the case for 'real' Labour values as he toured the country with his 'Just Say Naw' campaign. Other notable exceptions to Labour's dire performance were members of the Red Paper Collective, whose efforts were considerable given the lack of resources at their disposal and a wider platform from which to make their case for a class-based alternative to independence.

The SNP's prospectus was so full of holes you could have driven a bus through it. Rather than a significant departure from the status quo, it had status quo stamped all over it. Whether over the retention of sterling as the national currency (a disaster in the making for reasons by now well known); the retention of the Queen and heirs as head of state; NATO and EU membership; or a 3 percent cut in corporation tax, the SNP outlined a vision that could best be described as independence without independence. This is why I was confident of a 'no' vote up until the last two weeks, regardless of the deficiencies of the 'no' campaign.

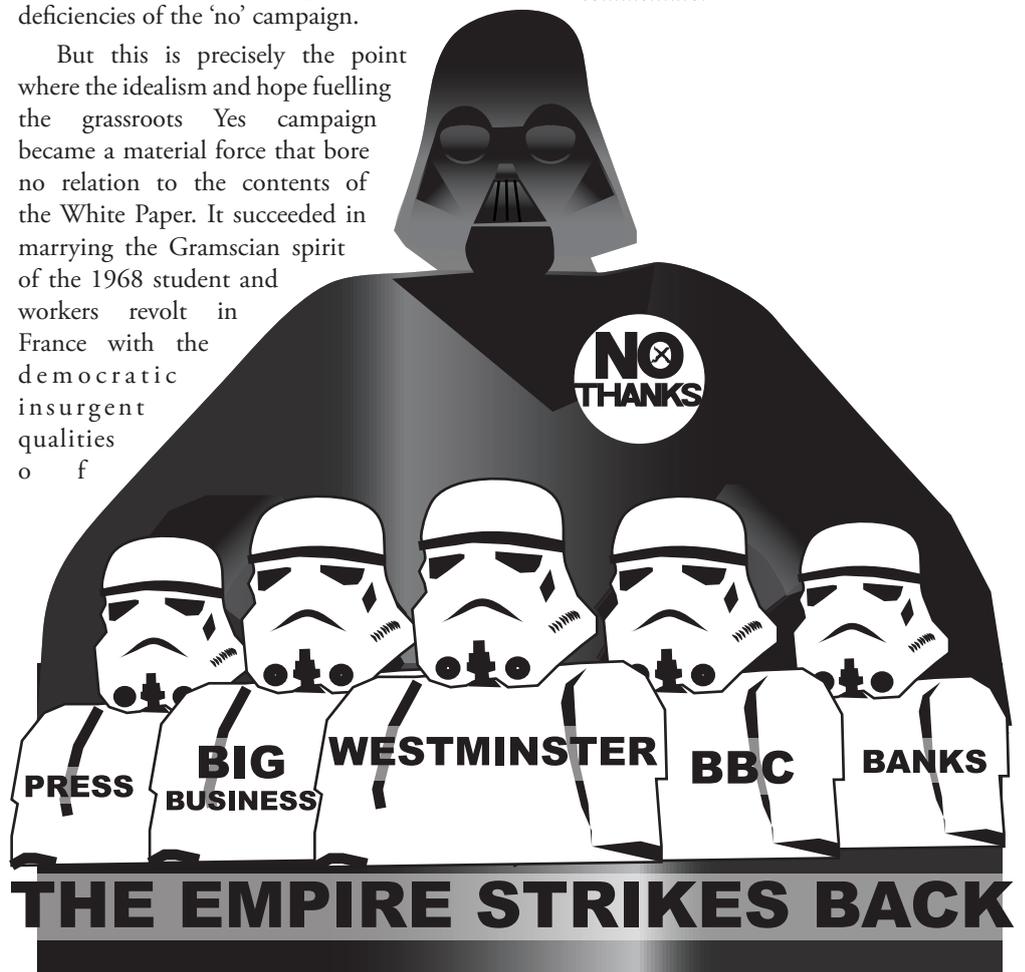
But this is precisely the point where the idealism and hope fuelling the grassroots Yes campaign became a material force that bore no relation to the contents of the White Paper. It succeeded in marrying the Gramscian spirit of the 1968 student and workers revolt in France with the democratic insurgent qualities of

the first presidential campaign of Barack Obama, and it appeared unstoppable. Driving down Leith Walk in Edinburgh a week ago the charged atmosphere is something I have never experienced in all my time in politics. I thought then that we were headed for a Yes vote and independence.

As for what comes next, the independence supporting Scottish left will do its utmost to capitalise on the momentum and energy unleashed by the Yes campaign. New parties, new alliances, and new possibilities will be discussed, debated, agreed and disagreed. If a realignment of the left emerges with independence as its core demand, it cannot afford to fall into the trap of failing to take on the SNP in the present over class issues surrounding policing, housing, taxation, and so on in service to the wider objective. If it does, if it cedes ground to the SNP, then the issue of class will be lost or parked in the cul de sac of nationalism. Dealing with the limitations of nationalism will pose a significant challenge for any new left formation that now emerges.

Whatever happens, Scotland's political terrain has undergone a seismic shift and nothing will ever be the same. Those who fail to understand this and adapt accordingly are headed for political oblivion.

*John Wight is a writer and political commentator*



# Moving forward – promising plenty but with danger of diversions

Grahame Smith outlines the most likely post-referendum scenario, showing there are opportunities and dangers

After two years, during which the independence referendum has been the all-consuming context for political and economic decision making in Scotland, the people have spoken. While the result was a decisive vote for Scotland to remain in the UK, with 45% voting 'yes', support for an independent Scotland is now at an all-time high.

In the weeks ahead, the vote will be the subject of much analysis. From information currently available, it appears that, in general terms, the under 40s voted 'yes' and the over 40s 'no'; the poor voted 'yes' and the rich 'no' with the four local authority areas voting 'yes' being amongst those with the lowest employment rates in Scotland; a substantial number of 'traditional' Labour supporters, around 30% voted 'yes' (as did a fair number of Labour activists); and while the votes of union members may well have been fairly evenly split, taken together, it is likely that a majority of current and potential union members voted 'yes' too. All of this has considerable implications for the union and labour movement across the UK. That said, it is important to avoid reaching kneejerk conclusions based on such generalisations.

The one thing that can be said with complete certainty is that the referendum was a triumph for democracy. The phenomenal turnout came on the back of months of discussion and debate in workplaces, in communities and within families. There was a thirst for information and engagement the like of which I have not previously witnessed. I am immensely proud of the role the STUC played through our *A Just Scotland* initiative in responding to that demand.

The binary way in which much of the media reported the referendum meant that, by deciding not to promote a Yes or No position, the contribution made by the STUC and by affiliates representing the majority of union members, received marginal coverage, particularly in the latter part of the campaign. However, I know that the STUC's contribution was hugely valued by unions and their members and was commended by a range of serious commentators for its

balance and the rigour of its analysis. A quick look at our three *A Just Scotland* papers easily reveals how accurate we were from the outset in highlighting the critical issues: the lack of credibility of the Scottish Government's position on currency; the need for the unionist parties to address the demand for further devolution and commit to retaining the Barnett formula; and the central importance of fairness and social justice to a large swathe of the electorate. All were defining issues.

We also played our part in igniting the vast civic movement for real and progressive change that has grown in Scotland in the last two years. More union members and their families registered and turned out to vote than ever before. Many of those voting, some for the first time, and on both sides, voted for the constitutional settlement they felt would create a fairer and more just Scotland. They also demonstrated they want a real say over the decisions which affect their lives, including within the workplace.

The debate has now moved on to the further powers to be devolved to the Scottish Parliament. It is essential that this debate is not left to the politicians alone and that it delivers a substantial and meaningful package. The voice of civil society, so important in the creation of the Scottish Parliament, must be heard through direct engagement with people and communities.

Unfortunately, the signs are ominous. The appointment of an unelected politician to lead the process is hardly a sign of inclusiveness or of respect for democratic participation. While Scots are clearly impatient for change, the timetable which Gordon Brown invented on the hoof is hardly conducive to intensive civil and community involvement. The motion lodged in the House of Commons calls for consultation with the Scottish people on the proposals of all three UK parties. Are we simply to be handed down minimalist proposals developed in a pre-referendum context which we can either take or leave?

The STUC published its views on

enhanced devolution in March 2014, prior to the referendum. It would be odd if we did not recognise that 45% of the public voted for all of Westminster's powers to transfer to the Scottish Parliament and reconsider our position.

Constitutional change is about powers but it is also about purpose. For us, and for a vast number of those who voted one way or the other, that purpose is a fairer more socially just Scotland. To date, the focus on further devolution has been on fiscal and welfare powers. However, the important levers are those over wages and the labour market. It would, therefore, be appropriate for us to look again at the case, for example, for the devolution of powers over employment and union rights, including union recognition and collective bargaining and other forms of workplace democracy, and over the minimum wage.

The artificially restrictive timescale, and a process which is focussed only on consultation over the existing proposal of the three main Westminster parties, suggests an outcome that will be less than satisfactory. The Scottish public are impatient for change and a prolonged process is in no one's interest. However, without the time for proper community engagement the danger is that the outcome will be a shabby political compromise that fails to satisfy and delivers proposals that have not been sufficiently scrutinised for their economic and social impact with the risk of a variety of unintended damaging consequences.

It must also be recognised that any proposal for enhanced Scottish devolution will be intensely scrutinised in Wales, Northern Ireland and in London not to mention by those who we know already wish to attach conditions to Scottish representation at Westminster.

A scenario in which a cobbled together deal is met with hostility in Scotland because it is perceived not to go far enough and hostility elsewhere because it fails to take account of their demands and, therefore, falls apart either before or after the General Election is all too easy to envisage.

It is clear that the constitutional debate in Scotland can no longer be held in isolation from a debate about de-centralisation across and within the UK as a whole, or crucially within the union movement. There is much to be won for working people through union leadership of the debate on enhanced regional government in England and further devolution in Wales and Northern Ireland.

The structure of the union movement

including the arrangements of our union centres must reflect the post-referendum reality. We need an early and mature debate about the relationship between unions and the union centres in all jurisdictions of the UK, a debate which arguably should have taken place well before now.

At last the rest of the UK has woken up to the debate about the decentralization of power and the consequences of devolution. The example

of the Scottish referendum, in the way that it re-engaged the public in politics and in the debate about where power lies and the purpose for which it should be used, is one that, if extended across the country, could fundamentally transform the UK's established institutions and create the conditions for progressive social and economic change.

*Grahame Smith is the General Secretary of the STUC*

## Words of Welsh wisdom

Leanne Wood argues that the September spring of the referendum will lead a new democratic blossoming

Despite the obvious disappointment at the outcome of the referendum result, there is so much to be proud of. That the people of Scotland had the opportunity to decide their country's future is remarkable. One day I hope we in Wales will have the same chance. The Yes campaign was a campaign of the people. It was bottom-up, grassroots, inclusive, community-oriented. 'Yes' was David. 'No' was Goliath.

It was a campaign that brought together young and old, energising many who, for so long, had given up all hope of change through the usual electoral process. Something special was created. It was a democratic revolution, the like I've not experienced before. That almost half the country opted for Scotland to become an independent state is a tremendous achievement, especially considering the gap in the polls just a few months before polling day.

This isn't a time for a post-mortem despite our collective disappointment. The British state and its agents threw everything against the cause of Scottish independence. Their fear-mongering straddled between the lines of absurd and the offensive. A democratic process was polluted by threats and untruths. The message of hope may not have trumped such tactics this time, but it is unsustainable to keep bullying or frightening a nation into subservience.

The collective might of the British state and all that it has at its disposal was displayed during these few weeks in full. Does this pose a question about whether we in both Wales and Scotland might be better placed in our respective national causes by having simultaneous independence referenda in the future? How can the energy and strength built during the campaign now

be built upon and nurtured to ensure the movement lives on? Can the newly-politically-inspired sections of society continue to participate in the democratic process so that future success can be achieved? If they can, there is great hope for the future. It is encouraging that pro-independence parties are seeing unprecedented numbers of people joining them.

This shows the mood for radical change has not died.

For Wales and Scotland, the coming period is crucial in maximising a transfer of powers from Westminster to our countries. There has been talk in the past of devolving elements of social protection to Scotland although the bundling of most benefits into one, single universal payment may make it difficult for Unionists to make such a concession.

We contend that it is only with the full social and economic tools that come with being an independent country can we achieve the means of delivering an alternative to neo-liberal, austerity-based politics. But any opportunities to gain control over any elements of social protection should be seized.

During a speech I gave to a Radical Independence in Glasgow earlier this year, I spoke of my hopes of Scotland emerging as a society that could become a beacon of social hope for all of us in these islands. I talked about the idea of solidarity through divergence, whereby Scotland's pursuing of an alternative path to Westminster social policy would be beneficial to the wider left across these islands as we would have a tangible alternative to point to on our doorsteps.

That tangible alternative will not now be available to the extent that it could have been with an independent Scotland. But even new minimal powers in this

area for Scotland could be a microcosmic example of what's possible for Wales, but crucially too, for the people of Scotland themselves. By establishing the beginnings of a Scottish welfare state, a renewed call for an independent Scotland could emerge, with citizens demanding an entirely new Scottish welfare state.

The left in Scotland were instrumental in the last yes campaign and they will be in the next. The numbers of former Labour supporters who backed independence, against the will of their party leaders, has created an irreversible realignment in Scottish politics. For many now, Labour is seen to have diverged from the left. By positioning themselves with Etonians and bankers and against the people, Labour are seen as having sold their political soul at the altar of Unionism. They could well pay a heavy political price for doing so, and its effects may not be limited to just Scotland either.

Many of us were uneasy about the role played by the (Labour) Welsh First Minister in the 'no' campaign. The only concrete demand he made for Wales during the campaign was for weapons of mass destruction to be relocated to Welsh shores in the event of a 'yes' vote. He invented for himself the power to veto a currency union in line with the threatening, fear-mongering nature of the no campaign. Progressive left politics in these islands is now in the hands of our national movements, not with any of the Westminster establishment parties. A new state may not have been achieved this year. But a new democracy is born.

It is being cradled by the people and it will be nurtured by them into a renewed national cause.

*Leanne Wood AM is leader of Plaid Cymru – the Party of Wales*

# Getting a return on our investment

Dave Watson sees the prospect of a positive outcome for social justice in Scotland

While Scotland divided on the route to change, there was a clear consensus that a fairer Scotland is possible. The big question is, are the politicians up for the challenge and able to turn their rhetoric into action?

The posters are coming down, but the unprecedented level of political engagement won't go away as the democratic genie has been let out of the bottle. Politics became an acceptable subject for conversation in workplaces and pubs, facilitated by traditional media and old style meetings, as well as social media in its many forms. Of course, it wasn't all positive. People with a cause can sometimes close down debate with their unwillingness to see any other point of view, but the norm was real debate and more analysis of contemporary Scotland than we have ever seen before.

UNISON decided not to support either campaign, but that doesn't mean we didn't have a view. Our *Fairer Scotland* and other papers challenged both sides. The degree of focus and support for public services during the campaign was welcome. People made it very clear that they value public services; they want more investment not more cuts; they reject privatisation and they demand that public services remain in public hands. They also want a fairer and more equal society.

For the political parties, it was all a bit confusing. Significant numbers of Labour supporters voted 'yes' and similar numbers of SNP supporters voted 'no'. Both will face big challenges and opportunities in the months ahead.

The new SNP members are not likely to have joined because they support the core neo-liberal economic policies in the White Paper. As Ewan Morrison put it: 'The Yes camp has created an illusion of a free space in which everything you've ever wanted can come to pass – overnight'. Those aspirations don't match the risk analysis of the SNP hierarchy, as the currency issue most notably highlighted, and new members will quickly become disillusioned if there is not a significant change of direction.

Scottish Labour can congratulate itself on the result, but it's left with a massive hangover. Gordon Brown may well have injected some much needed passion into the No campaign, but talk of change is undermined every time Ed Balls opens

his mouth. The risks of independence sounded a bit thin to those who have little to risk and this is reflected in the 'yes' vote in areas like Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, West Dumbarton and Dundee. The big challenge for Labour is to make tackling inequality the central objective of their policy in 2015 and 2016. Labour needs to be radical in its response, campaigning as insurgents and not as part of the political establishment. It remains to be seen if all its senior politicians are up for that approach.

## Unions and other civil society organisations will now help to bring Scotland together and press for radical change.

Unions and other civil society organisations will now help to bring Scotland together and press for radical change. We will expect that the promises of more powers made by the main parties in *Better Together* will be delivered upon and a constructive approach to this from the Scottish Government would do them credit. UNISON outlined its approach in our *Fairer Scotland - Devolution* paper and I would argue that the referendum result indicates broad support for this sort of radical change. It is ironic that Labour,

as the party that delivered devolution, should start this process with the least radical proposal. It can, and should, recover from that position.

The referendum has also sparked a wider debate about constitutional change across the UK and in particular, England. This won't be sorted by a quick political fix. The lesson from the referendum campaign is that it needs to give people the opportunity to shape the way they are governed. However, in all this constitutional debate we should remember that the real question is how new, or indeed existing powers, are to be used for the benefit of working people. Powers have to be deployed for the purpose of delivering a different type of economy that works for the majority of working people.

An early opportunity in Scotland will come on 15 and 18 October with the STUC and Poverty Alliance conference and rally as part of the Challenge Poverty Week, when union members from across Scotland are coming together to say it's now time to create a just and fairer Scotland.

The lasting legacy of this referendum campaign should be the broad political consensus across Scotland on the need to create a fairer, more equal society. If we can achieve real progress on that issue, then the time and effort so many Scots put into the referendum will have been worthwhile.

*Dave Watson is the Head of Bargaining and Campaigns at UNISON Scotland*



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# Assessing the campaigns – processes and outcomes

Michael Keating delves into both the 'yes' and 'no' campaigns to reveal their contradictions

When the Yes campaign was launched in 2012, I did not give it much chance of success. Support for independence had been steady for around twenty years at around 30%, depending on the precise question. The big change had happened under the Thatcher and Major governments, when Scotland experienced serious political alienation. The victories of the SNP in the 2007 and 2011 Scottish elections happened against the background of slight falls in support for independence. Given all this, a vote of 45% for independence is a significant achievement, as is the fact that 'yes' gained in voting intentions during the campaign. Of course, 45% is still a defeat but the strong support for various 'devolution-max' options has meanwhile shown that many people were not content with the choice that they were offered.

We might conclude that 'yes' won the campaign but lost the vote. It was able to fight a 'ground war', against the 'air war' which the 'no' side pursued. The mobilization of people not associated with the SNP was critical, reaching into social networks and communities that had often lost touch with politics. 'Yes' was able to seize upon, and make its own, fields common to both sides but which previously belonged to the unionist parties.

The first one was 'Scotland', obvious territory for the SNP, but one the unionist parties have played very successfully in the past, standing up for Scotland against London and playing Scottishness into a pluri-national vision of what it means to be British. Since the devolution and the advance of the SNP, however, they have lost their ability to play the Scottish card. Scotland, for its part, has been changed from a historic legacy and a cultural reference into a vibrant political community.

The second field is union, where the unionists should have the advantage. Yet they have lost their old understanding of union in ever-more contrived attempts to define 'Britishness'. Of the six Unions (political; European; monarchical; monetary; defence; European), Alex

Salmon only wanted to end one, thus, capturing the traditional unionist discourse brilliantly.

The third field is that of welfare, historically Labour's. The 'yes' side used the UK coalition's welfare reforms to suggest that Scotland would be a more caring society. Scottish Labour insists that welfare is essentially a UK matter and that the UK is essentially about welfare, proclaiming to the end that a Labour government in Westminster is the only solution. This ignores the changing contours of welfare, the existence of a Scottish level of solidarity, and the distinct line taken in Scotland on universalism and service delivery. Labour now talks about devolution of welfare but clearly does not believe it in substance.

## We might conclude that 'yes' won the campaign but lost the vote.

The fourth field is that of the economy, public spending and taxation. Here the unionists had a built-in advantage, given the obvious risks of independence, yet the unionists came close to undermining their own position. Threats can be an effective weapon in politics but only if they are not overdone. There was a real problem about sharing sterling, which the 'yes' side never effectively addressed. Yet this message was lost in exaggerated claims about losses of firms and jobs and, perhaps most absurdly, claims that prices in shops would rise after independence (belying a basic understanding of how market economies work). The threat of the banks to relocate to England confirmed the idea that the UK parties still think that rescuing banks from their own follies is an appropriate use of taxpayers' money. This was something about which the SNP has always been very wary, however, and only a few commentators made the obvious comment when, on the last weekend, the banks threatened to move their headquarters (but not the jobs), namely, if UK

taxpayers are prepared to rescue what used to be nominally Scottish banks, that makes independence a lot easier.

By implying that Scotland could not prosper on its own, unionists suggested that Scots are not capable of managing their own affairs. The Treasury analysis papers argued that Scotland was a rich country, that it got more than its share of public expenditure, that it could not afford its public services but that, thanks to the mysteries of the Barnett formula, English taxpayers would foot the bill. This was bound to come to the ears of English politicians, who will make much of it in the months to come. It infuriated people in Wales, where there has long been discontent about Barnett. The Labour Party's insistence in its various papers that expenditure is allocated across the UK on the basis of need is simply wrong. Barnett does not, and never has, had anything to do with need.

As the old politics comes to an end, Scotland will have to pay its own way but the 'yes' side never presented a convincing socio-economic model. It made gestures to the Nordic countries but the SNP stuck with pledges to cut business taxes and not increase others. There is a future for a social democratic Scotland and it does not require independence. It does require more control over taxation, a welfare reform based on enablement rather than punishment, and a commitment to new forms of social partnership. In the last year, Scotland has been remade as a political community, a space for the discussion of the big policy choices and for social compromise. This represents real progress.

*Michael Keating is Professor of Politics at the University of Aberdeen and Director of the Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change. His most recent book (with Malcolm Harvey) is *Small Nations in a Big World. What Scotland Can Learn* (Luath Press).*

# Post-referendum dialogue on the left needs to start fast

John McDonnell argues now we have the potential to work together on a unified left agenda

Prior to the referendum I avoided making any public comment because I judged that the sound of English accents advising the Scots about their future came across not only as unseemly arrogance but more importantly it was totally counterproductive to either side of the argument. The hilarious video of Labour MPs marching up Glasgow streets to the accompaniment of the imperial march from Star Wars was a suitable depiction of the counterproductive engagement of English MPs in this whole debate.

However, now the referendum is over, there are pressing strategic issues that socialists on both sides of the border quickly have to address collaboratively. The referendum result and the subsequent statements by Cameron present the left with the potential of the worst of all worlds. The left that backed independence to free Scotland from the Tory yoke can quite justifiably take pride in the scale and enthusiasm of the political mobilisation in the referendum debate. But as dawn broke on results day it was still faced with a sizeable majority voting No.

The left that argued independence would divide the class and weaken working class institutions across Britain rendering a Labour government unlikely in the future with the loss of 41 Scots Labour MPs may have won the referendum vote. But it woke up the day after the poll with Cameron planning to strip Scottish MPs of their vote on crucial issues anyway, rendering the prospect of a workable Labour government in the current political climate precarious to say the least.

Accompanying this is the prospect that as a backlash to the referendum vote, Labour could be under threat in many of its traditional Scottish working class seats in the forthcoming May 2015 general election. There is not as yet a serious alternative electoral force on the left and, therefore the only beneficiaries could be the SNP, possibly depriving Labour of a majority at the UK level and allowing the Tory/Lib Dem coalition back in.

As socialists we could be faced with the worst of all worlds, namely, for the former 'yes' campaigners, no independence and for the 'no' campaigners no UK Labour government. And, for all of us, the return of either the Coalition or worse still a Tory majority government. That is why the left speedily needs to get its act together to start a dialogue on the options facing us both in Scotland and also across the UK.

## The referendum campaign was about democracy.

If we take it as read that no matter what the constitutional arrangements our objective is an irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working class people, then we need to map out how we can use the opportunities that the referendum debate has opened up to us.

Let me just trace out some elements of a possible agenda for a dialogue on the left. The first is how the left maximises the progressive potential of 'devo max'. One argument put forward to support independence by the left was that Scotland could demonstrate, by example, what a progressive country could achieve and that this would serve to strengthen the left in encouraging the rest of the UK to follow suit. The Tory, Labour and Lib Dem leaders solemnly committed themselves in their much publicised 'vow' to the Scottish people that they would deliver 'devo max'. Most took this to mean significantly strengthened budgetary and taxation powers.

As the left, let's use the 'devo max' promise to put forward what a fair and redistributive budgetary and tax system would mean. If there are to be new taxation powers for Scotland, do not let the type and design of these powers be constrained by Westminster. The SNP has argued for Scotland to have the ability to cut corporation tax in a race to the bottom with Ireland and others. Instead,

let's put on the agenda for Scotland a Land Value Taxation, a comprehensive wealth tax and a Tobin tax.

The referendum campaign was about democracy. So instead of centralised budget making the left should demand as part of the new 'devo max' constitutional settlement the adoption of the kind of participatory budget making developed in Port Allegro. The referendum campaign was the most significant mobilisation of people power we have witnessed in our country in generations. Don't let that people's army stand itself down now. Give them another task in demanding a direct say in determining what they would want Scotland's resources spent on and how.

It would also be worth putting on the agenda of the 'devo max' negotiations the issue of who controls welfare policies and spending. If there are to be concessions on welfare powers, it also gives the left the chance to raise the introduction of a citizen's basic income.

Raising these issues as part of the 'devo max' settlement will inevitably throw up questions about the generation and distribution of resources at the UK level. From a reactionary perspective, there have already been murmurings about reviewing or scrapping the Barnett Formula.

If there is to be any effective redistribution of power and wealth under 'devo max', very quickly the real question for the left will be how to confront finance capital in the City of London. It is on this issue the left, wherever it is located in the UK, will need to work closely together to secure any effective advance. That's why a new dialogue on the left in Scotland is desperately needed, and some of us in the rest of the UK would welcome an invitation to the discussion.

*John McDonnell is MP for Hayes and Harlington. He is Chair of the Socialist Campaign Group at Westminster.*

# Aye and sí – homage to Caledonia from Catalonia

Anna Arqué takes inspiration from the process and the outcome

Because I'm Catalan and consequently have read and heard many opinions from 'know it all' foreign contributors about my country's independence movement, I write these words about the Scottish independence referendum with the utmost respect.

'The person who really wants to do something finds a way; the other finds an excuse'. So does a country. To say that Catalan politicians may not be able to organise an official referendum because of the opposition of the Spanish state is as lame as to say that the Scottish do not hold massive rallies because of the weather; meaning, Scottish politicians dealt with Westminster's open resistance in the same way that Catalan people march even when it's hot enough to fry an egg on the streets. The will of both countries' pulling forces, Scottish Government and Catalan citizenship, have successfully set a new political landscape for both Scotland and Catalonia, with no excuses, engaging Scottish society and Catalan politicians with each cause.

The SNP's determination gave Scotland the chance to officially exercise Scottish sovereignty in front of an expectant international community. However, it must also be said that through work of many political groups and social activism not related to SNP and in many aspects opposed to government that the 'yes' movement became the shared 'will' of a plural Scottish collectiveness whose thrust is, naturally, to reach out for a different model of society than the one imposed by Westminster. An eclectic mixed of grassroots and institutional activity flourished into a 'will' which has shaken Scottish politics. To the disgust of many this has not damaged its epicentre; on the contrary, after the referendum, the SNP has increased its membership to become UK's third biggest political party. On top of that, Scottish politics for independence has broadened its horizons with many other milieus fighting for a new country, all of them now firmly settled into a pluralistic society increasingly aware of the benefits of an independent Scotland. A new coordinated scenario

for independence is geared up to carve through many places and backgrounds. The 'Yes' campaign dared to believe and 'the 45plus' is a solid declaration of principles.

When Alex Salmond was first questioned about the lack of Scottish powers to celebrate a referendum on Scotland independence, he masterfully lived up to the definition of 'democrat': 'We will find the mechanisms to bind the referendum's result, because that is what democracy is about'.

This last sentence defined it all. I'd like to point out how this attitude was translated into Catalan politics as it may help to understand what may happen in my country over the next weeks. Many of us Catalans recognised in Salmond a statesman. Others though opted to camouflage his leadership, later on applauding Westminster's recognition and crediting to England all merit for making the referendum a reality. Extracting the merit from the Scottish leadership and transferring it into UK, the fate of Catalan referendum was automatically chained to the Spanish state's decision, pretending to excuse the Catalans politicians from any responsibility. For the last two years, Catalan media, opinion makers and even government politicians have been dismissing Scottish accomplishment: 'the reason why Scots are able to vote about the independence in a referendum is not because of Scottish politics, the reason is UK's good will and democratic fair play'. 'The state has the key' was the message delivered by the status quo to Catalans, left in a cul-de-sac by knowing beforehand the Spanish state opposition. At the moment, the Catalan government faces huge pressure from the population to obey the popular Catalan mandate and we'll see how much the belief 'because that is what democracy is about' is shared by our politicians.

The 'yes' campaign bet for a plural and inclusive approach detaching itself from an overall SNP leadership, prominent figures from the Greens, Labour for Independence, Radical Independence Campaign, social activists, artists and business representatives were invited to share the front row and there

you had Patrick Harvey, Colin Fox, Kevin Williamson and Michelle Thompson next to Alex Salmond. The 'yes' campaign achieved what is essential in order to produce a campaign promoted from the top and conceived to convince Scottish citizens to assume the future of their country, with all its rights, duties and political responsibilities. The essential ingredient was include all Scottish voices in favour of independence, empowering the base, motivating the people to participate. After being a polling agent, the night of the referendum I was invited to be at the Edinburgh count as an accredited counting agent and witnessed the sense of 'united, coordinated, together for the cause of independence' as a RIC member put it. That was the spirit - a huge success to congratulate you all with.

A long campaign followed with enthusiasm by many millions of Europeans observing how the Scottish people were creating a political precedent by exercising the universal right of self-determination in twenty first century Europe. With the referendum, Scottish contribution went beyond its own fight for change because you made democracy a winner and with this, you made us all win. You may even have saved Europe from its own drift on values.

The final result, though, was not what we had hoped for. Reviewing the chain of events some friends questioned if the 'yes' campaign was too optimistic and we should have explained that our pensions being inside UK meant they are the worst in Europe. Unfortunately, this time fear won over hope.

Questions are unavoidably raised by political analysts trying to pinpoint whether a different approach to topics such as currency, NATO, monarchy etc could have pushed the 'yes' vote to win (but it is well worth noting that a different approach may also have meant 'yes' not producing the impressive 45% for).

Remarkably, hours after result, Scottish activists filled out again the same Glasgow square where they stood for days announcing that the biggest Scottish city was ready to vote 'yes'. Positive vibes were restored despite all, and George Square

was once again full with people collecting food in a solidarity call. Change happens even when the votes don't back up the biggest plan. Right then, we saw, Scottish independence is just waiting around the corner. Afterwards, the unionist riots made me think of Goethe's saying 'some people will never be ready for any change, condemned to live in the shadows as they have not learn anything at all.'

Independence is not only one electoral result. The change must happen

from within and there is no doubt that Scottish 'aye' has started to do the walk while others got stuck with the empty talk. The '45' response is invigorating evidence, a national consciousness raising ready to move forward with no looking back. The '45' is the hope over fear and is just the beginning. The already uncovered three-sided unionist tricks will help with that, plus a 'lost in translation' labour drama strengthening the pulse on the Scottish 'aye' side. And last but not least,

there is the daring Scottish youth who turned out to be Scotland's solid hope. Ultimately, nothing can stop a happy combative country when young legs race with a strong but ancient heartbeat!

'While quacks of State must each produce his plan. And even children lisp the Rights of Man' Robert Burns.

*Anna Arqué is a political activist based in Barcelona and the Spokesperson for Catalonia International Commission of European Citizens (ICEC)*

## Keeping up the fight against poverty

Peter Kelly and Carla McCormack call for action in the new post-referendum period towards banishing poverty

The referendum and associated campaigns have re-invigorated Scottish democracy and engaged voters in a way never seen before. Voter registration hit 97% and turnout was a record 84.5%. We saw all sections of society engaged in serious discussion about the type of Scotland we want to live in and how we best achieve this. It is clear that people want change and there is now a critical need to act on demands for a more socially just Scotland.

For many people, issues surrounding welfare and social security were at the heart of the debate and it is important that we keep the focus on these issues as we move forward. Poverty is the biggest issue in Scotland. In 2012/13, 16 per cent of people were living in poverty; this figure rises to 19 per cent for children (see web reference below). These figures are too big to ignore and whichever party is in government – at Scotland and UK level – will need to make tackling poverty their priority.

The three main UK parties have all promised the devolution of further powers to the Scottish Parliament. The Poverty Alliance, alongside other anti-poverty campaigners, will need to consider these offers, and the implications of devolving welfare powers on the delivery of social security in Scotland. We do not want to see people left worse off as a result of splitting up social security powers.

It is important that there is a clear understanding of what is being offered, and what this means for people experiencing poverty in Scotland. It is also imperative to remember that this is about more than where power lies. This shouldn't be about a simple transition of power from Westminster to Holyrood; there needs to be meaningful change and there has to be the political will to find a solution that works for Scotland.

Perhaps, one of the most important

aspects of the referendum campaign has been the re-engagement of thousands of people across Scotland with debates about the future of the society they live in. In communities that have borne the brunt of poverty people have come out to vote in numbers not seen for generations. Maintaining the levels of engagement will be a challenge, but it is something that all of those who care about social justice in Scotland must now focused.

It is this re-engaged electorate that should encourage the political parties to find the political will to make change. The Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties have each put forward different proposals, and the SNP and Greens are both committed to working with the Scotland Devolution Commission to ensure that meaningful agreement can be reached in the tight timetables laid out.

The commission, led by Lord Smith of Kelvin, is due to publish its recommendations by 30 November and there is concern that this leaves limited time for civil society organisation to engage and consider the implications of new powers on those most in need. This is a real cause for concern. If we are to build on the high levels of participation that we have witnessed over the last few months, then the Smith Commission needs to find ways to engage with these grassroots voices.

It is our intention to work alongside our others in the voluntary sector to feed into the commission and make sure that our members and people experiencing poverty are heard so that any new powers deliver real change for those who need it most. Our starting point for this will be the Poverty Alliance's annual conference that will take place in Glasgow on the 13 October.

It is now important that both sides of the campaign are able to work together to ensure that we do not lose the

momentum that has been built over the recent months. Over the course of recent months, it has been clear that there is significant common ground on social attitudes and now that the referendum is over, there has to be a way of bring together all those who care about social justice to find common ground. Ultimately poverty is a political choice. The fact that we still have the levels of poverty that exist in Scotland is a political failure. There is no need for poverty to exist in twenty first century Scotland and this is something which the campaigns have agreed upon. We now have the great opportunity for meaningful change in Scotland. By working together and keeping poverty at the centre of debates about new powers, we can create a fairer, more equal Scotland.

Scottish Government (2014) <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/statistics/browse/social-welfare/incomepoverty/publications>

*Peter Kelly, Director, and Carla McCormack, Policy and Parliamentary Officer, work at the Poverty Alliance ([www.povertyalliance.org](http://www.povertyalliance.org))*

# DECENT WORK DIGNIFIED LIVES

for

A

JUST

SCOTLAND



## A Just Scotland Conference

'A Just Scotland – Decent  
work, Dignified lives'

15th October:

Hilton Hotel, Glasgow

This major conference will draw speakers and workshop presenters from across Scotland, the UK and internationally. It will focus on key issues of income inequality in the workplace and for those out of work, addressing in plenary issues such as the state of the labour market; basic income and the foundational economy. There will also be workshops covering aspects of income inequality; regional economic development; collective bargaining; early years & childcare policy; the Living Wage; and rebalancing the economy.

More details on the conference will be published here as the programme is finalised.

In the meantime if you require any urgent information please email [dmoxham@stuc.org.uk](mailto:dmoxham@stuc.org.uk)



Say NO to ConDem cuts

For all public transport in public hands

For offshore safety

For trade-union rights

Mick Cash, General Secretary

Peter Pinkney, President

## Book Review

### Private Island - why Britain now belongs to someone else

By James Meek, Verso Books, 2014, pp229, £12.99

Within living memory we British thought it possible that our seemingly mature democracy entailed of its nature open mindedness. That is ideas, especially our crucial economic ones, were inherently pragmatic in that they were open to constant scrutiny as to what they were practically achieving. We prided ourselves as an anti-ideological people of robust common sense; ours was a relatively happy land where compromise and conciliation were always finally available. For us, Marxism, especially the Stalinist version, rightly represented the catastrophic destructive consequences of an allegedly progressive but absolutist ideology running unchecked.

James Meek, like so many of our most important Scottish writers, is a man of global passage and curiosity. He is, in turn, investigative journalist, political thinker and, most importantly, an extremely fine novelist. His extraordinary novel, *The People's Act of Love*, is a historical work set in Russia just prior to the Bolshevik revolution which remarkably foresees the world of terrorist violence in which we all increasingly exist.

Meek has also had contemporary actual experience of Russia and the Ukraine during the bizarre breakup of the Soviet Union and the appearance of oligarchic hyper capitalism whereby Marxist promise of economic equality has been totally inverted. A kind of sub Darwinist world has been created, with the inevitable economic result which it is that the tiny minority of the rich (1%) get richer and the poor get grotesquely poorer.

The present book reveals that, albeit in less extreme form, Meek perceived that returning to Britain we, post-Thatcher, were in thrall to a similar process. He reveals Thatcher as the matriarch of this movement with Blair as her son and heir. Blair, of course, is worshipped by the present government as they attempt to

consummate his legacy. Thatcher was, in fact, a kind of malignant hybrid composed of America neo-conservative elements and her implicit belief that she was our saviour from imminent Communism. As she wrote of the miners' strike: 'what the strike's defeat established was that Britain could not be made ungovernable by the Fascist left'.

A Marxist Britain is, of course, a past and present fantasy. What Thatcher did was create a left wing monster of all pervasive evil which would justify an extremist destruction of it. As Meek points out, she was never a creature of intellectual or cultural breadth, and had a political mind-set derived from her grocer father and a cursory reading of Friedrich Hayek. Meek describes Hayek thus:

*'The Road to Serfdom* claims that socialism inevitably leads to communism and that communism and Nazi-style fascism are one and the same. The tie that links Stalin's USSR and Hitler's Germany, in Hayek's view is the centrally planned economy – as he portrays it, the attempt by a single central bureaucracy to direct all human life, to determine all human needs in advance and organise provision, limiting each to their rationed dole and their allotted task.'

Her answer to this was, behind a mask of reforming the nationalised industries, to smash them up and replace them with frequently foreign fiscal and technological energies. What Meek displays, with a novelist's eye for telling detail and empathy for much human suffering, is that this policy has been in every respect catastrophic. Like Blair, she believed that privatisation was implicitly modernisation. In his six chapters of acute analysis Meek reveals how the post office, the railways, the water boards, the power generators, the NHS and the privatisation of property have delivered us a series of reckless disasters whereby our technological prowess has suffered and that much of the wealth is outwith British hands.

It is perhaps a desperate sign of the times that it takes a great journalist/novelist to write such a book. Not only politics but economics has washed its hands of everyday reality. If this process is allowed to complete its programme one cannot but think that Britain faces a fate similar to Chile's, with a tiny minority of hyper-rich, a neutered middle-class and a massive impoverished majority. Pinochet, after all, was not a court favourite for nothing.

Andrew Noble

## Web Review

Henry McCubbin

THE elderly did not rob the young of an independent Scotland, according to YouGov's final poll of how Scotland voted in the independence referendum.

Their study of 3,188 voters showed that 51 per cent of those aged between 16 and 24 voted 'No'. It also revealed that more than one in five SNP supporters turned their backs on independence. The breakdown has come from YouGov's referendum night poll that predicted a 'No' win with 54 per cent of the vote. Some 55.3 per cent voted against independence in the official vote. A post-referendum poll of 2,000 conducted by Lord Ashcroft said that 71 per cent of 16-17-year-olds and 48 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds voted 'Yes', giving ammunition to Yes supporters that the young were being deprived of an independent Scotland by their older peers. However, only 14 people in that age group responded to the survey. The YouGov poll found:

Only eight per cent of Tory voters supported independence while 27 per cent of Labour supporters and 29 per cent of Liberal Democrats voted 'Yes'. Out of five age groups only the 25-39-year-olds supported a 'Yes' with 55 per cent backing independence. The biggest supporters of 'No' were voters over 65, with two in every three preferring to stay within the UK.

Some 55 per cent of 60-65-year-olds and 53 per cent of 40-59-year-olds backed Better Together. A total of 74 per cent of those voters who were born elsewhere in the UK voted 'No'. Some 51 per cent of Scots-born voters supported independence. The poll also found twice as many voters said Yes campaign activists at polling stations were acting unreasonably, at six per cent, to No's three per cent.

The decision to allow the 16 and 17-year-olds to have the vote in the referendum was hailed by the now outgoing First Minister Alex Salmond in his concession speech. He declared the involvement of Scotland's youngest voters in the referendum a 'resounding success'.

The full breakdown of the YouGov poll is available at

<http://yougov.co.uk/news/2014/09/19/scottish-independence-final-prediction/>

*The full breakdown of the referendum vote including local authority areas can be viewed at <http://scotlandreferendum.info/>*

## In Scotland and Beyond, a Crisis of Faith in the Global Elite

Neil Irwin of the *New York Times* has given us this analysis of the state of the US and the connection that it has with Scotland's predicament (see link <http://nyti.ms/1Dpfwcl>).

In Scotland this week, a measure to become an independent country and end the United Kingdom as we know it failed, but it would have succeeded with a swing of just 5 percent of the vote. Earlier in the week, a right-wing anti-immigration party in Sweden claimed its largest-ever share of parliamentary votes. And in the United States, new census data released this week showed that middle-income American

families made 8 percent less last year, adjusted for inflation, than they did in 2007. What these stories have in common is this: they lay bare a crisis of faith in the global elite.

There has been an implicit agreement in modern democracies by which it is fine for the wealthy and powerful to enjoy private jets and outlandishly expensive homes so long as the mass of people also see steadily rising standards of living. Only the first part of that bargain has been met, and voters are expressing their frustration in ways that vary depending on the country but that have in common a sense that the established order isn't serving them. Democracy is not working any more. Many do not bother to vote. All politicians seem locked in. It is all about PR and making impressions and...

In Britain, a Labour government led by a Scottish prime minister (Gordon Brown) and his Scottish finance minister (Alistair Darling) supported the so-called financialization of the British economy, with the rise of global megabanks in an increasingly cosmopolitan London as the

center of the economic strategy. Then, in 2008, the banks nearly collapsed and were bailed out, and the British economy hasn't been the same. That economic failure ushered in a coalition government in 2010 that is even less aligned with the Scots' preferred policies, bringing an age of austerity when the Scots would prefer to widen the social safety net.

**DECENT  
WORK  
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**JUST  
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**stuc** **the POVERTY ALLIANCE**  
CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT POVERTY

## A Just Scotland March and Rally

18th October:

**Muster 10am Glasgow Green**

**March from Glasgow Green 10.30am**

**Rally in George Square**

Creating decent work and providing dignity for those who cannot work is at the heart of the battle against austerity and tackling inequality.

As part of Challenge Poverty Week, trade union members and community activists from across Scotland are coming together in October to say, irrespective of their views on the outcome of the referendum 'It's time to create a Just Scotland'.

**Bring your friends and families**

**Bring your work mates**

**Bring your banners ...**

**Transport and Coaches**

Transport is being organised by unions and local trade union councils. For further information please contact your trade union branch or local trades council

Information on drop off points, parking and collection points for coaches and other transport information will be published here shortly

VLADIMIR McTAVISH'S

# Kick up the Tabloids

So the dream is over for the time being, at least. I sincerely believed that I would wake up on the morning of 19 September to find out I no longer lived in the same country as Jeremy Clarkson, Piers Morgan, Boris Johnston and Eddie Izzard. But I still do, and it's bitterly disappointing.

Over the years I've grown accustomed to disappointment. I am old enough to remember 1978 in Argentina. Whereas this year, we had the perfectly reasonable expectation that Scotland could become an independent country, back in 1978 we were labouring under the ridiculous notion that we could actually win the World Cup. My disappointment now is minor by comparison.

Yes, out the ashes of Argentina arose the phoenix that became the Tartan Army. Likewise, now, we are also witnessing the growth of a new movement, drawing inspiration from the passion, the energy, the imagination and the creativity of the Yes Campaign.

It almost feels as if we won. Yet we lost. Why?

It is tempting to say some voters did believe some of the Better Together scare stories I know someone who voted 'No' because he didn't want members of his family to become foreigners. Well, I like foreigners. And, I don't particularly like certain members of my family.

What is clear is that many people made their minds up at the last minute. The last polls had it 51 to 49 to 'No'. So the 'don't knows' must have switched to 'No'. In other words, the future of Scotland lay in the hands on indecisive numpties.

Either that, or people lied to opinion polls. They frequently do. Polls for Westminster elections always show Tory support to be lower than it turns out to be at the ballot box. Because people lie to the polls. Voting Tory is a bit like domestic abuse. Nobody is ever going to admit to doing it, but statistics prove that it happens.

Another factor was the intervention of Gordon Brown. At the eleventh hour, Better Together suddenly twigged what the rest of Scotland had known all year. Namely that Alastair Darling and Johan Lamont were utterly shit at their job. Brown's last minute offer of wider powers

may well have been enough to swing the undecided.

It shows how blinkered and lacking in vision the rest of Better Together was. It took a man with one eye to see the wider picture.

Another reason that 'Yes' lost was down to the throwing of eggs at Jim Murphy. It didn't happen often enough. That Jim Murphy had an egg thrown at him in Kirkcaldy just goes to show the strength of feeling that was out there, when someone is prepared to queue up for an hour at a food bank to get an egg to throw at a Labour MP. The whole Murphy incident furthermore illustrates the degree to which New Labour has lost its working-class roots.

## It almost feels as if we won. Yet we lost. Why?

When John Prescott had an egg thrown at him, he didn't go bleating to the press about 'intimidation'. He re-acted with dignity. By panelling the guy who did it.

Over all, there was surprisingly little violence during the campaign for what was such an important vote. Things may have kicked off in Glasgow on night of Friday 19 September. But things frequently do kick off in Glasgow on a Friday night. Furthermore, the violence in Glasgow had nothing to do with politics but everything to do with Rangers fans who've been looking for someone to

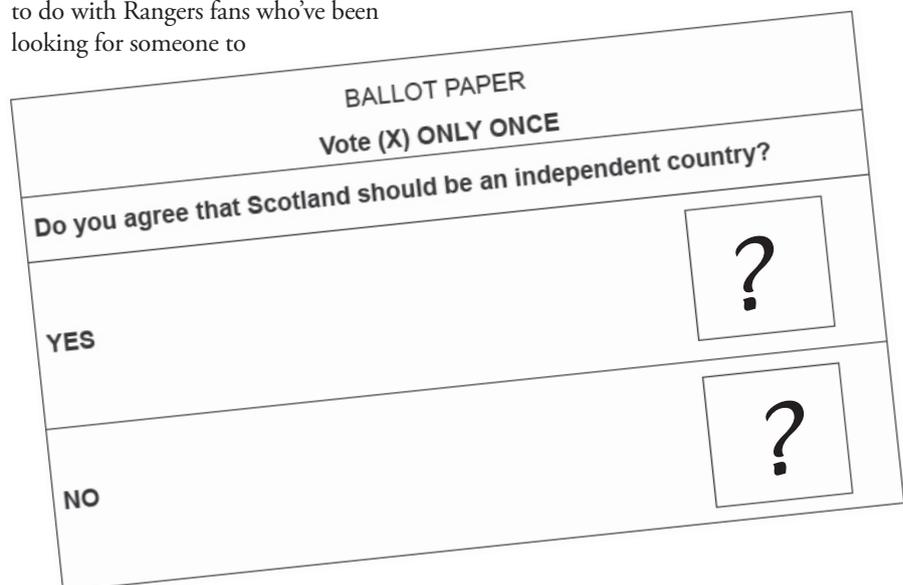
have a fight with for the last three years.

I suspect many of the people attacking 'Yes' voters and burning saltires in George Square were the same people who had been on the Orange March in Edinburgh the previous weekend. The fact that the Orange Order should have organised a rally to preserve the future of the Union was itself historically significant. It was the first time in over three-hundred years that the Orange Order have shown any interest in the future.

It is important that we all look forward rather than back. After all, I still have to write jokes about this shit. In the days that have elapsed since the Referendum result became clear, I've been struggling with a personal dilemma. When should I stop wearing my 'Yes' badge? I'm still wearing it at the moment, and it looks like an act of defiance and pride. In a few months' time, it may not send out the same signals. But the, who knows what lies ahead in the next few months?

A long road lies ahead and we live to fight another day. To mis-quote that greatest of Scots, Mel Gibson: 'They may have taken our freedom, but they did not take our lives!'

*Vladimir McTavish will be hosting a new political comedy show at The Stand Comedy Club, Edinburgh on Wednesday 19th November. Further details on [www.thestand.co.uk](http://www.thestand.co.uk)*



# Scottish **Left** Review

Issue 83 October 2014

*THE COVER THAT  
COULD HAVE BEEN.  
we had commissioned  
2 front pages and  
this was the YES one*

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