

**Welcome to Scotland:** UKIP leader Farage waltzed into Edinburgh on the back of his English council elections successes - bad move, Nigel...

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# Scottish Socialist Voice

# TAX THEIR BOARDROOMS - NOT OUR BEDROOMS

*by Richie Venton*

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**CAMERON:** owns spare homes



**LORD FREUD:** 11 spare rooms



**CLEGG:** in bed with the Tories

**Turn up the heat on the ConDems over the Bedroom Tax**  
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# Farage media firestorm illuminates increasingly right wing unionist agenda

by Ken Ferguson

**WHEN** seeking advice on a venue for his Edinburgh press conference to launch his Scottish push, UKIP chief Nigel Farage's team apparently consulted *Daily Mail* political journalist Alan Roden, who suggested three possibilities including the eventual venue, the Canon's Gait. A key consideration from Farage's media team was that "Nigel could enjoy a pint of heavy" building on his home counties real ale, man-of-the-people image.

In the event, although he faced heavy protests, the result of his experience was more bitter than he anticipated and his confinement in the Edinburgh pub certainly gave a new meaning to the term "lock in."

What the ensuing media storm showed above all was the real and rapidly growing political divergence between Scottish and British politics with Farage receiving wall-to-wall coverage for his assertion that a section of those protesting at his extremist views were themselves "fascists". That this largely synthetic row ran and ran and even generated a front page splash in the metropolitan-based *Guardian* and took top spot on the BBC tells us little about the real news value of Farage's Edinburgh foray but great deal about the rightward march of British politics.

## 'Swivel-eyed loons'

Just as Farage went off the boil as a running story, up popped a "close friend" - unnamed - of David Cameron to tell journalists that the Tory grass roots activists were "swivel-eyed loons" who risk wrecking the carefully burnished moderate image of Cameron Tories as reasonable moderates.

That the story figured prominently in the *Daily Telegraph*, the house journal of the Tory English shires and sounding board for the



**BARRAGE FOR FARAGE: UKIP's radical reception in Edinburgh**

"fruitcake" right wing is yet another sign of the growing strength of the Tory right who are either deeply suspicious of or openly hostile to Cameron's supposed "moderation." The story follows on the declarations in favour of an EU pull out by former Thatcher-era chancellor Nigel Lawson and right wing minister turned media pundit Michael Portillo both deeply damaging to Cameron and de-stabilising for the coalition with the pro-EU Lib Dems.

At the heart of the growing strife in the Tories is the reality - sky written by the recent frenzy around Thatcher's death - that vast swathes, even a majority of the party remains on the hard-right.

Suppressed initially by the relief of getting a partial hold on power with the Lib Dems, the hard nosed "nasty party" core of the party gradually broke cover. Issues such as the thinly veiled racism of the immigra-

tion debate, the demonising of benefit claimants, the sick and the disabled and the entire big lie that the crisis engineered by city speculators is actually to be paid for by workers jobs and pensioners living standards. Meanwhile the representatives of the Tory grass roots queue up to denounce gay marriage in a further challenge to the carefully cultivated moderate and modern image of the Cameron camp.

If this rightward drift was simply confined to the English Tory shires it would be bad enough but the truth is that, with the aid of a shrill media campaign from the likes of the *Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail*, it is increasingly tilting Westminster politics to the right. So the Labour reaction to these developments is to float stories that they will be equally "tough" on claimants, take a hard line on immigration and duck and dive on the EU. They huff and puff about the iniquity of the Bedroom

Tax but in reality have not committed to scrap it, while north of the border they increasingly favour scrapping universal benefits in what they term "freebie Scotland".

Against this background to launch a breakaway No campaign against independence reflects growing unease by rank and file Labour supporters, voters and trade unionists at sitting around the same table in the class collaborationist Better Together campaign with Tories and Lib Dems. However, by choosing to front the event with Gordon Brown who spent years in government praising the innovation of the city speculators who authored the crisis they showed the empty nature of their non-alternative to the ConDems. The listing of former Labour glories such as founding the NHS and building social housing failed to mention the reality that subsequent Labour governments sold off social housing and did little to oppose privatisation in health.

## Tear jerker

And of course we heard the old tear jerker call for the Scots to stand by English workers in the face of a Tory England even if that means volunteering to subject Scottish workers to a Tory government they never voted for while failing to mention that the Brown and Blair government kept anti-union laws which make such solidarity illegal.

The truth is that the demand for a Yes vote - stripped of all the vote Yes and die No scares - has at its core one simple fact. Independence would ensure that voters in Scotland would get the government that they actually voted for and the policies they support. As Westminster lurches right, that growing gap between the politics that result and the vision of a democratic, inclusive Scotland will increasingly play a crucial role in the battle for a Yes vote.

# LITTLE ENGLANDER FARAGE HAS NO PLACE IN SCOTTISH POLITICS

When **Nigel Farage** attempted to re-launch UKIP in Scotland, he was challenged by protesters from the Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) who told him that xenophobic politics were not welcome in Scotland. This subsequently led to Farage calling the protest "anti-English" and decrying the "ugly face of Scottish nationalism". **Liam O'Hare** of the Edinburgh RIC explains why he participated in the protest

**THOSE** who protested the UKIP leader did so, not because of where Mr Farage was born, but because UKIP are a party with a well-documented agenda of racism, homophobia and sexism.

Indeed, their far-right politics are largely alien in Scotland, where there is a broad consensus around the need for more progressive policies on immigration.

The scapegoating of immigrants for society's problems, a line peddled by not only UKIP but all the Westminster parties, is challenged with a different narrative in Scotland. This was what we saw happen on the streets of Edinburgh during the Farage visit.

## Purpose

The purpose of the protest was two-fold. Firstly it intended to damage Farage's attempt to project UKIP as a legitimate Britain-wide party, as relevant in Scotland as anywhere else.

Secondly, to highlight how distinct the political climate in



**FACE TO FACE:** ugly face of nationalism is met by the Radical Independence Campaign's Liam O'Hare

Scotland is from England - a Thatcherite, anti-immigrant, anti-welfare state Little Englander like Farage has no place in Scottish politics.

Indeed, the "ugly face" of Scottish nationalism needs to be juxtaposed with British nationalism - which is a damn sight uglier. It is British nationalism which has been used to drum up support for illegal wars and the expansionist, aggressive foreign policy of Britain.

It is British nationalism which screams "British jobs for British workers" and says we need to leave the EU and shut the borders. And it is British nationalism which lies at the heart of the deep-rooted racial and ethnic prejudices in our society.

The distinctiveness of the political climate in Scotland is becoming more apparent with

every passing day. Indeed, politics in Westminster could almost be being conducted in an entirely different orbit. From austerity to Trident and the European Union to immigration, the consensus in Scotland is for something altogether different than what the British Government has planned. The alarming rise of UKIP is merely indicative of this.

## Wedge

And the deeper this wedge is driven, the more likely it is that we will witness this political divide turning into a constitutional one.

A Panelbase poll released in the *Sunday Times* said that if the UK looked likely to withdraw from the EU, then support for independence would be equal with those opposed, at 44 per cent. In amongst all the commotion of

his visit to Scotland, perhaps what Nigel Farage did not realise is that it is an aversion to his type of politics that might tip the balance in the referendum next year.

It has always been clear that people will only vote for independence in 2014 if they think it will make a positive and fundamental difference to their lives. The rightward turn of politics in England, combined with the growing momentum of the Radical Independence Campaign is making this outcome seem more and more likely.

A new generation is emerging, arguing for Scottish independence on a radical, inclusive basis.

Not only are we leaving the reaction of Farage and UKIP behind, we could soon be leaving the corrupt British system behind too.





# Some UK countries are more equal than others

says Campbell Martin

**THE** true outlook of the English ruling class was made clear shortly after the Union of 1707, when Britain's First Lord of the Treasury, Robert Harley, asked the new British Parliament, "Have we not bought the Scots, and may we not claim the right to tax them?"

It was the same Robert Harley (Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer) who, prior to the Union, had sent a number of spies to Edinburgh with the remit of informing on the activities of the Scots. One of the spies was Daniel Defoe, who would later find fame as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, which was based on the real-life experience of Fife sailor Alexander Selkirk who had been shipwrecked and marooned for four years on an uninhabited island off the coast of Chile.

Within the British Union, Scotland has never been an equal partner with England. In 1707 the English parliament believed Union was simply the most convenient, and least bloody, means of removing a potential enemy on its northern border. In 'buying' Scotland, England concluded a deal it saw as a 'win-win' - not only was a historic enemy pacified, but Scots were now to be at the call of London in England's foreign wars, including against France, a nation that had always enjoyed friendly relations with Scotland.

Initially, though, things didn't go quite as England had planned. Within eight years of the Treaty of Union, many Scots rose to support the French-backed James Stuart in his claim to the British throne - the Scottish and English crowns having come together in 1603 when James VI of Scotland assumed the English throne on the death of the childless Queen Elizabeth.

James Stuart was a descendent of James VII of Scotland (James II of England), who had been deposed in 1688 by an army led by Dutch-born William of Orange (who was married to King James' daughter Mary). The 1715 'Jacobite' uprising - taking its name from Jacobus, the Latin form of James - was an attempt by the House of Stuart to reclaim the British throne.

It would be entirely wrong to portray the 1715 Jacobite uprising (or the later one in 1745) as being conflicts between Scotland and England. In fact, what lay behind the Jacobite rebellions was a dispute between two aristocratic dynasties over who should rule ordinary Scots and English, and over which religion - Catholic or Protestant

- should prevail. The mixed nature of the opposing armies is shown in reports of the Jacobite advance into England. It was recorded that they picked up around 1,500 English recruits as they marched through Lancashire.

However, the Jacobites then suffered a significant defeat to a Hanoverian army, which included members of the Clan Cameron, at the Battle of Preston. The House of Hanover had assumed the throne in 1714 when German-born George I succeeded Queen Anne, who had, herself, succeeded her brother-in-law William of Orange in 1702. Ultimately, the Stuart attempt to reclaim the throne was defeated and James escaped back to France in February 1716.



**ROBERT HARLEY:** asked British Parliament 'Have we not bought the Scots, and may we not claim the right to tax them?'

The 1745 Jacobite rebellion saw James Stuart's son, Charles Edward Stuart, also make claim to being the legitimate sovereign of Scotland and England, as the descendent of the deposed King James VII (James II of England). Like his father before him, Charles Edward Stuart - known as Bonnie Prince Charlie or the Young Pretender - called for the support of ordinary men and led an army into England, reaching as far south as Derby. Again, Scots and English fought on both sides, in armies thrown into battle to defend the claims of two aristocrats, both of whom professed to be their rightful lord and master.

Unlike the earlier uprising, the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion was to have devastating consequences for ordinary Scots, including many who had not even supported it. Once again, forces loyal to the Hanoverian British monarch pushed

the Jacobites back into Scotland, culminating in a bloody battle at Culloden, near Inverness, on 16 April 1746. Again, this was not a fight between Scotland and England. Contemporary accounts record a significant number of ordinary Scots fighting on the side of the British monarch and government, while the Scottish Jacobites were augmented by English Episcopalians, alongside Scots and Irish regiments of the French army.

British forces were led by Prince William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland and son of King George II. Culloden was a decisive defeat for the Jacobites, but it was what happened following the battle that was to have a deep impact on the Highland way of life, and on Scotland's place within the British Union. Having won a resounding victory, Cumberland then ordered his men to scour the battlefield, killing anyone they came across, whether they were wounded Jacobites, fleeing Clansmen or innocent bystanders. The 'justification' for such brutal action was a claim that the Jacobites' battle orders had contained the instruction that 'no quarter' should be given to British forces. However, the copy of the battle order containing the 'no quarter' instruction was a British forgery.

Marching under the British flag, Cumberland's men then turned their attention to the area around the battlefield, hunting down any Jacobites who had managed to escape, and killing them. Many innocent villagers and farm-workers suffered the same fate. Similar atrocities continued in the weeks and months following the battle, with hundreds of ordinary Scots killed and more burned from their homes.

Understandably, the brutal actions of British soldiers earned their leader the name 'Butcher Cumberland', with many Scots, to this day, referring to "the Butcher's apron" to describe the British flag under which atrocities were committed. The British parliament, containing just 45 representatives from Scotland - all of them members of the aristocracy - then enacted punitive legislation designed to curb the power of the clan system and prevent any further Highland-initiated uprisings against the British monarchy and establishment. However, the new laws had much deeper consequences, leading ultimately to the destruction of the supportive social structures of the traditional Highland way of life and paving the way for the landed-aristocracy to carry out the act of ethnic cleansing that was the Highland Clearances.



by Richie Venton

**THOUSANDS** are marching in Scotland against the vicious, vindictive Tory Bedroom Tax. Anger is turning to outrage on the streets and on the demos, as this cruel theft of income from the poorest has claimed its first victim.

Stephanie Bottrill, a grandmother, was driven to suicide by the impossible prospect of having to find another £20 a week. She had done without heating all winter to save up for the Bedroom Tax bills.

Horrific reports are emerging of investment of time, money and staff hours by social landlords in what amounts to 'suicide watch'; housing staff, caretakers and welfare rights workers are being sent on courses to spot the danger of suicide amongst those tenants affected by the Bedroom Tax. What a searing condemnation of the system and government we live under in the 21st century!

All because the Westminster Cabinet, stuffed full of 23 millionaires - including Welfare Minister Lord Freud, with his two mansions and eleven spare bedrooms - dictates that 670,000 households across the UK have 'spare bedrooms' and are to be punished for it.

### Millionaire tax cuts

All because the Tories and Lib Dems are waging war on the working class, robbing hundreds of £billions off benefits and wages, so the millionaires can enjoy an annual tax cut of £107,000.

And people's anger is not restricted to those directly affected, including the 105,000 households in Scotland. An absolute, decisive majority of those queueing up at SSP street stalls to sign petitions demanding 'No evictions - Scrap the

# MARCH IN ANGER! EVICT THE TORIES

PHOTO: Simon Whittle





# BEDROOM TAX

Bedroom Tax', tell us "This doesn't actually affect me, but..."

These 105,000 households in Scotland - including 83,000 with at least one registered disabled family member - are at the sharp end of the Tory Tax. But this affects us all in some way.

When many of those confronted with bills of £10 a week or more on incomes of £71 simply can't afford to pay, rent arrears means the threat of evictions - but it also threatens the jobs and wages of workers in local housing associations and councils, plus the vital services they provide in communities.

An estimated £53million shortfall in rental income to social landlords this first year alone because of the Tory Tax has already begun to take its toll. At least one Glasgow local housing association, whose bosses are on £100,000 and £85,000 each, have declared redundancies and ruthlessly cut the wages of staff with 20-plus years of devoted service to their tenants by a shattering £5,000 a year. Their "explanation"? That they have to cut back due to the Bedroom Tax and Universal Credit.

## Vile propaganda

The Tories and Lib Dems thought they could divide working class people with their vile propaganda about 'skivers and strivers', 'shirkers and workers' - but a growing unity is turning into action again the Tory architects of the worst assault since the Poll Tax. That's why those marching through Glasgow on Saturday 1st June should and will then turn their fire on the Scottish Tory party conference in Stirling the following Saturday, 8 June, on the protest march called by the broad-based No2BedroomTax campaign.

We need to make the Tories feel like an endangered species in Scotland - but with no plans for conservation! They need to feel the hot breath of fury at what they are presiding over and justifying, and given the clear message that the only people who will be evicted in Scotland are the Tories - not tenants.

And evictions are a very real threat - contrary to those who scoffed when we warned of this months ago.



PHOTO: Simon Whittle



## NOISE-UP THE TORIES: protests have had positive results

For months before the tax was imposed on April Fools Day, the SSP, No2BedroomTax campaign, Unite Community union and others took to the streets demanding that councils, local housing associations and indeed the Scottish government outlaw the threat of evictions.

Repeated protests and street campaigning has had some positive results. Councils controlled by the SNP have pledged there will be no evictions for at least the first year - provided they are satisfied "tenants have made all reasonable attempts to avoid rent arrears". So has the Labour/SNP/Green coalition Edinburgh city council. And some local housing associations have adopted the exact same policy with the exact same proviso attached.

Those are welcome, if faltering steps in the right direction. And let us be clear: they did not drop from the sky; they are concessions won by vigorous, determined campaigning on the streets, outside council meetings, through the local media and at councillors' surgeries. People in protest can win concessions.

But the danger inherent in the clause about 'making all reasonable attempts to avoid rent arrears' is that it could lead to backdoor evictions, unless the pressure is kept up on the social landlords and the mainstream politicians - even including those from the SNP. When tenants are eking out an existence on £71 a

week, how the hell is being expected to pay ANY amount of Bedroom Tax 'reasonable'?

When people already under a repayment arrangement for previous rent arrears are then hit by demands for £10 or more Bedroom Tax, all the 'attempts' in the world will still make it impossible to avoid rent arrears and therefore they could face actual eviction procedures.

The SSP has fought from day one for councils and local housing associations to not only help every affected tenant apply for Discretionary Housing Payments to reduce the impact of the Tax, but also to mount a ferocious campaign for funding off the Scottish government to fill the shortfall in rent. This side of getting the Tory Tax scrapped - which is our clear, unqualified aim - that is the only serious route councils and LHA bosses can take if they are genuine about avoiding evictions.

Likewise the SSP has demanded throughout that the SNP government should use the powers they already have under the straitjacket of devolution to mitigate the crucifying cuts people face. To outlaw all evictions, which would cover local housing associations as well as those councils (such as those run by Labour) which are refusing to declare 'no evictions'; and to cough up the guesstimated £53million shortfall in rents to social landlords this year, to stop cuts to jobs, pay and services - and to then

spearhead a Scots rebellion demanding back the stolen £billions off Westminster, so that neither housing, the NHS, education, transport nor any other public service suffers cuts.

The Labour Party has unleashed a great hue and cry of criticism of the SNP government for not declaring an all-embracing, national 'No Evictions' policy. But Labour's hypocrisy on the Bedroom Tax and indeed evictions has a more overpowering stench to it than the average sewage works on a hot summer day!

Labour councils have failed utterly to declare against evictions. Worse than that, a mere six weeks into this vicious Tory Tax being installed, Labour councils in both North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire have delivered letters threatening evictions.

## Mother threatened

In South Lanarkshire, this scared the living daylight out of the likes of Angela Buskie, mother of three, who they expected to pay £22.08 a week, leaving her £10 a week to feed herself and three kids. She was threatened with being turfed out of her home, in a letter delivered by hand on a Sunday - because she owed them £129!

Faced with news of this outrage, Labour council leader Eddie McAvoyn claimed it was a mistake; that he knew nothing about such letters being sent out. Either he's lying, or the elected Labour councillors have allowed unelected officials to run riot in wielding the Tory Tax as a blunt instrument against tenants on rock bottom incomes.

In the case of North Lanarkshire Labour council leader Jim McCabe, no such feeble explanation was given. No claims of mistakes, no public apologies, no immediate withdrawal of the threatening evic-

tion letters. This is Scotland's biggest single social landlord.

On 13 March, North Lanarkshire Labour boldly tweeted "tomorrow we will be campaigning against the vile Bedroom Tax".

Weeks later, whilst Labour politicians make hay out of the abject failure of the SNP Scottish government to unequivocally ban Bedroom Tax evictions, McCabe's Labour council threatened a Coatbridge man with eviction - a single man, with a history of mental illness, who has never incurred rent arrears prior to the Bedroom Tax, and had requested a move to a smaller house, but was told none was available. And the letter warns him of legal costs of £289.70 because he has accrued the grand sum total of £50.10 in arrears!

These rank hypocrites are playing games with people's lives. Spouting opposition to the Tory tax to recover some of their lost base in Scotland, but not even promising to abolish it if they win the 2015 Westminster elections, and meantime implementing the Tory Tax like a gang of fundamentalist zealots, against the very people they falsely claim to represent. At UK level, Labour's Shadow Minister Liam Byrne has declared "we are not going to make promises we can't keep"!

## Labour hypocrisy

We can't rely on the Labour opposition at Westminster nor local Labour councillors to resist and disrupt the Tories' tax. Far from it, they are at the forefront of implementing it. Opponents of the Bedroom Tax, including those directly hammered by it, need a twin track plan of action against the threat of evictions: building local networks of people prepared to mount human walls of solidarity against any attempted evictions, and piling the pressure on the politicians and housing association bosses with demands that they outlaw evictions, fight for full Discretionary Housing Payments, and launch a serious campaign for Scottish government funding to remove the prospect of either slashing staff and/or harassing people for rent arrears they are simply incapable of paying.



**CHALLENGE THE RULE OF THE RICH: join the movement against the hated Tax** PHOTO: Simon Whittle

Running parallel to these demands against evictions, the SSP, No2BedroomTax and others will continue to pound the social housing landlords with pressure to reclassify their homes, so that rooms are declared 'not liable' to payment of the Bedroom Tax. That road is being travelled by Knowsley Council on Merseyside and Nottingham council.

The first and so far only Scottish Council to have partially conceded this is North Ayrshire. They now promise to reclassify rooms, starting with smaller rooms that they may declare to be boxrooms. This is a breach in the defences of Councils that say their hands are tied.

It is the result of a wave of repeated protests, organised by the SSP in Ayrshire, with twice-weekly street stalls, big public meetings, numerous highly publicised protests at council meetings.

They now need to be pushed to reclassify all their houses - as do other councils and housing associations across Scotland.

If enough do this, as well as fending off the dire poverty and potential evictions, it would help make the tax unworkable.

The SSP has been at the heart of building meetings, protests, demos

and anti-eviction networks. We have spearheaded putting pressure on council and housing association bosses to outlaw evictions, reclassify rooms and demand the funding off the Scottish government to offset loss of rental income and the astronomical rise in applications for Discretionary Housing Payments - an increase of 338 per cent across all council areas in the month of April, with the biggest increase of any area in the UK being in Glasgow, where 5,501 desperate people have applied for these emergency payments, compared to 1,437 the previous month!

But the SSP will also continue to empower people with the knowledge that there is absolutely no excuse or justification for this daylight robbery of benefits.

## Filthy rich

The country is awash with wealth, but it's in the hands of a filthy rich handful. Last year the richest 1,000 people - that's a piddling 0.003 per cent of the population! - INCREASED their personal wealth by £35billion. That's 70 times more than their hired political servants in the Tory/Lib Dem Coalition are stealing off the poorest through the Bedroom Tax. The richest 100 fat cats had an average rise of £2billion.

So 100 people could live on the minimum wage and then still pay the entire Bedroom Tax bill for all those affected for the next 400 years!

The system of capitalist exploitation and inequality is absolutely obscene. Fighting the Bedroom Tax is one important step in turning the tide of crucifying cuts to living standards suffered by millions under successive Tory and Labour governments.

The fearless fighters marching against this measure should go on to help build a powerful, united movement to challenge the rule of the rich, with demands for taxing the billionaires and boardrooms, not our bedrooms, and for democratic public ownership of the banks, big industry, construction, energy and all public services.

That way - the socialist way ahead - could ensure decent, skilled jobs for all, on a guaranteed living wage, including to build top-rate social sector housing at affordable rents.

Join the marches against the Bedroom Tax. Build a movement to evict the Tories, not tenants.

Join the Scottish Socialist Party in the struggle for an independent socialist Scotland, where benefit cuts, poverty pay, poor housing and mass unemployment will be banished.

# Who cares for the carers?

by Sandra Webster

**THE** Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) highlighted the stresses faced by unpaid carers last week claiming that 40 per cent of carers may have depression as a symptom of their caring responsibilities.

It is estimated that there are seven million unpaid carers in the UK while the Scottish Government themselves estimate carers in Scotland alone contribute ten billion pounds to the economy with unpaid care.

Perhaps due to it being seen as traditionally "women's work" the majority of unpaid carers who often have to give up work and study to support those they care for are women. Life has always been difficult but the austerity cuts which mean cutbacks in essential services mean the strain is having a huge impact on already fragile lives.

"Mary" cared for three children two of whom had cerebral palsy. Their needs meant she had to look after the twins round the clock.

She had asked for help and only received two hours of help a week. She struggled on until her own health

deteriorated and she was admitted to hospital. Three years after she now has her daughters home and gets the extra help she requires.

Unfortunately her daughters had to be admitted to residential care at a huge cost to her local authority. If she had been offered the help she needed perhaps a loving family being separated could have been avoided.

Her story echos that of many today facing similar daily personal tragedies.

The RCGP offer practical solutions that could be carried out in every GP surgery.

## Screening

A carer's champion, a register of carers and the more controversial screening for all carers. They describe this as a simple questionnaire on mood and feelings of mental health wellbeing.

Carers organisations have been optimistic about this announcement as a means of getting into the wider press about how best we support those we care for others.

Other individuals perhaps more cynical of expert opinions have challenged what practical help a screening process for carer's

depression can be if there is little help available even when it is recognised how much it is needed.

A "carers' champion" has been a buzz-word for many groups recently.

Ironically Glasgow City Council who are clashing with many at their closures of day centres have appointed Dr Bell while the Labour Party have a carers' champion.

For many though facing rising debts due to the Bedroom Tax or loss of a day service for the person they care of there is little evidence of any carers' voices being listened too.

Rather than active participation it is just the usual patronising pat on the head and a "well done for all your hard work", that many are used too.

So this response will have not been even noticed by those who it should support. What would help is being involved in local campaigns around cuts to services and proper pay for the work carers do rather than a pitiful Carers Allowance. Fighting to stop the Bedroom Tax and the other benefit cuts which groups such as Inclusion Scotland have reported

disproportionately affect those household members with a disabled person.

I am also optimistic that we can look to other countries and use the services they provide as a blueprint for our vision of an Independent Scotland.

## Opportunity

I believe Independence gives us the opportunity to create a new Scotland. It is not good enough to say to carers 'vote for independence and everything will be wonderful for you and those you love'.

Carers more than most are well used to being promised so much that is never delivered. In the lead up to Independence we can share our vision of concrete proposals not vague glimpses of how lives can be better supported.

One thing is for sure in a landscape dominated by the evil proclamations of a Westminster Government who are ever far away from us, carers demand answers. to why voting for independence will be better for themselves and their families and why they should vote Yes.



## Join the SSP here

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

Or telephone: 0781 126 5388

Or see our website: [www.scottishsocialistparty.org](http://www.scottishsocialistparty.org)

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

Name.....

Address.....

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# WHAT LIES BEHIND THE FARAGE MEDIA STORM?

*Alan Bissett takes a look*

**LAST** Thursday myself and the SSP's Colin Fox were in Cupar at a Yes Scotland event, setting out our case for an independent socialist state. At the same time, the Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) were on the High Street of Edinburgh, picketing a press conference by UKIP's Nigel Farage. One of these events made national headlines. Let's ask why.

While RIC's accusations of fascism against Farage are misplaced - although not as misplaced as Farage's counter-accusation - a message was sent about the kind of politics which are unwelcome in Scotland. We should not be surprised, however, that the unionist media and politicians have been falling over themselves to defend Farage against the RIC, since the free ride UKIP have enjoyed from the British press stands in stark contrast to the ritual battering of the Yes campaign. Even *The Guardian*, Britain's most cherished left-leaning daily, showed Farage and Salmond squaring up on their front page beneath a headline stating 'Battle of the Nationalists', as though they are somehow identical.

## Challenge

It suits the establishment to compare UKIP to the SNP on negative grounds when appealing to a left-wing vote, but to defend UKIP when courting a right-wing one. This is because Farage, however much of an electoral threat he is to the mainstream parties, represents a butressing of the British state.

Scottish independence represents a challenge to it. It's also why - until last Thursday, at least - Farage was continually presented in even the sceptical media with a blokey



pint in his hand and a grin on his face: a man of the people. Not that they'd admit it, but UKIP are hostile to 'the people'. Have a guess what they think of single mothers or the unemployed, for example. This contempt applies especially to Scots.

Were their rhetoric alone not enough - UKIP's Lord Monckton believes 'the Scots are subsidy junkies, whingeing like a trampled bagpipe as they wait for their next fix of English taxpayers' money' - they intend to reverse devolution.

In their election manifesto they outline plans to replace MSPs elected to Holyrood with Westminster's own Scottish MPs. The same would go for Welsh and Northern Irish politicians. This allows Westminster to become a de facto English parliament. English autonomy is all fine and well following the break-up of the British state, but under the current structure UKIP's plan means the boosting of English power at the expense of the Celtic nations. UKIP are, in all but name, an English nationalist party, as well as a xenophobic one. It is for a reason that the fascist English Defence League are now instructing their members to vote UKIP.

So how dangerous is Farage to Scotland? While a majority UKIP government is a remote possibility,

there's still the frightening chance of a Tory coalition with them at the next election.

More likely, Tory policy will chase UKIP's on Scotland in the way it has on Europe. The Tories will seek to recalibrate London's relationship to Holyrood in their favour, as punishment for the Scottish 'rebellion'. When Farage reports back that he has 'seen the face of Scottish nationalism and it is ugly' he is prompting an English response. Paying him heed, however, would be disastrous for the English working-class.

It is a tactic of right-wing parties to pretend to working people that their enemies are foreign, to distract from the true nature of the class struggle. In every respect UKIP offer a similar menu to the Tories - anti-Europe, anti-immigration, aggressively capitalist - but do so with more personality and more blatant appeals to ethnic nationalism.

UKIP, like the BNP before them, may well exploit the disaffection of working people abandoned by Labour, but given that one of Farage's political heroes is Margaret Thatcher, English workers will only be walking into another capitalist trap. UKIP have no plans for jobs, wealth distribution or higher taxation of the rich. They have only what the British bourgeoisie have always

had: imperialist rhetoric and myths of glory, binding the workers to their masters' interests.

Sadly, there are sections of the Scottish media and political class all too happy to defend Farage. Clearing their throats with a brisk, 'We don't support his policies but...' they denounce the RIC for curtailing Farage's freedom of speech.

An increasingly-misnamed *The Scotsman* is the main offender in this regard. Freedom of speech, of course, includes the right to protest, but this is neatly ignored by a British establishment keen to portray Scottish independence as aggressive to 'civilised' values, even if it means backing a homophobic, xenophobic politician over a pro-immigration, pro-gay rights, pro-working class lobby like the RIC.

## Weakened

The way ahead for the 'British' proletariat is clear: a dismantling of the UK state so revered by Farage and his rich cronies. Once this imperialist construct is weakened, gaps will open up for socialists.

The English have been told by the likes of Farage that Scotland will fall to pieces without them. Once they see socialist policies develop in an independent Scotland - such as protection of the NHS and the building of affordable homes - they will realise this is possible for them too. They will ask serious questions of the so-called 'Labour' party and revitalise the English Left. This is why Farage has to be defended even by Scots unionists: they know the Westminster gravy-train would hit the buffers of a Yes vote.

In the meantime, Farage has been sent homewards to think again. Well done, Scotland. Now truly give him the message and turn that into a Yes.

# Welsh campaigners keep up the pressure against drones

by Harry Rogers,  
Bro Emlyn For Peace and  
Justice, Wales

**I RECENTLY** attended a small demonstration organised by local Quakers outside the MOD base in Parclyn just above Aberporth. There were only ten activists there on this cloudy day, plus one desultory police car parked 50 yards down the road. MOD Aberporth is renowned for having been one of the main missile testing ranges in Britain.

However it has effectively been privatised and, following a management buyout, it is now run by QinetiQ - a research company with many links to the MoD.

## Arms fares

There have been a number of arms sales fairs held at Parc Aberporth, in particular focused on Unmanned Aerial Vehicleless (UAVs) and Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs).

Since 2010 the base has been involved in the testing of the Watchkeeper drone (developed by Thales) for the British Army flying out of West Wales airport.

Members of Bro Emlyn For Peace and Justice and other



**DRONE:** base in west Wales has been testing the 'Watchkeeper'

local resident groups have been monitoring the ongoing drone development at Aberporth for the last ten years.

It is quite clear with the opening of the new drone facility in Lincolnshire that the British Government, like the rest of the world, are intent on maintaining and increasing the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for use by the armed forces in all current and future theatres of war.

However, it is also clear that there are other uses to which this technology can be put, including

surveillance and social control within the home borders. It is a fact that many police forces across the world have invested large sums of money in drones and are now using them on a regular basis.

It is also clear that there is now a lot of interest in the development of autonomous weaponry and surveillance systems using artificial intelligence (AI).

Such autonomous weapons are already in use in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the form of anti-aircraft weapons that don't have

to wait for a human to give it order to deploy.

There is a lot of discussion going on between the MoD and The Pentagon about the use of autonomous AI in drones and other robot development.

All of this research is partly driven by political aims in that it is becoming less and less acceptable for young men to be seen coming back from the front in body bags or severely damaged by conventional war.

Many people argue that the spectre of autonomous UAVs and other forms of social control technology is just pie in the sky sci-fi fantasy. This is a dangerous delusion.

## Lone battle

QinetiQ has its own AI division and has been linking its work with its UAV development for about seven years now. The Pentagon, via the Defence Advanced Projects Agency and the MOD, are regularly discussing the ethical dilemmas associated with selling the concept of drones that take their own decisions to the politicians and the people.

In West Wales, we have fought a lone battle against the developments at West Wales Airport and Parc Aberporth. Local politicians who are desperate to try and solve some of the economic development problems caused by recession and unemployment have been beguiled by the false promises of government agencies and arms manufacturers and have largely turned their back on the issues outlined here.

It is time for the people to take action and we need national co-ordinated support from peace activists for future events.

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HUNGARY: the fear is that a Conservative/Jobbik Coalition will eventually emerge, replicating the pre-war Horthy Regime

## FEAR OF HUNGARIAN DRIFT TOWARDS FASCISM

by Bill Bonnar

**POLITICAL** events in Hungary in recent months are sending alarm bells sounding throughout the country and further afield as Hungary drifts dangerously towards fascism.

The Conservative Coalition under Victor Orban have pushed through a range of radical measures aimed at 'those forces undermining the rights of the Magyar (Hungarian) people' and in removing the 'lingering remnants of the communist era'.

These measures include a Citizenship Law which extends citizenship to Hungarians living beyond the country's borders yet restricts the citizenship right of 'non-Hungarians'. Within this there is a special section on restricting the rights of Jews. A Religion Law which allows for state registration of Hungarian religions but withdraws that registration from religions such as Judaism and Islam.

A Political Law which reverses many of the liberal reforms first adopted after the collapse of the previous 'socialist' regime and which makes it a criminal offence

to use such terms as 'communist'. And a Media Law giving the government greater control of the media. Overall it appears part of a process aimed at curtailing Hungary's 'experiment' with democracy and moving the country towards a more authoritarian system of government.

Driving this process has been the emergence of the largest fascist party in Europe; Jobbik - Movement for a Better Hungary, which in the last national election emerged as the third biggest party in the country with 19 per cent of the vote.

Unlike similar parties elsewhere in Europe, Jobbik is an overtly fascist party. They draw inspiration from the pre-war Hungarian fascist dictator Admiral Horthy and often model themselves on the neo-nazi AVP party which briefly formed the government of Hungary during the Second World War.

Members of the party march in paramilitary uniforms with a party insignia based on the old AVB insignia which in turn was based on the swastika. The party is openly racist dividing the country between true blood Hungarians and everyone else.

It is openly anti-semitic, anti-gay, anti-foreigner and despises democracy. In part, the government's adoption of a range of far right policies is an attempt to outflank Jobbik although critics point out that what it is actually doing in practice is legitimising many of the Jobbik's political positions.

Fuelling all of this is a profound economic crisis. After the collapse of the previous 'socialist' regime in 1989 the country plunged headlong into crisis with collapsing savings, runaway inflation and rising unemployment. The capitalist response including de-regulation, privatisation and slashing public expenditure failed to deliver the western paradise many Hungarians expected neither did the country's entry into the EU in 2003.

Any hope of long term recovery was smashed by the financial crisis of 2008 and today the country suffers a combination of high unemployment, high inflation, unsustainable debts and large scale poverty. Perhaps the most telling statistic, Since 1989 it is estimated that more than one million Hungarians have permanently emigrated from the country.

This combination of a seemingly never ending economic crisis and the lack of a credible Left opposition have driven large numbers of Hungarians to the right in search for solutions.

Increasingly foreigners are seen as the enemy whether they be minorities such as Jews and Roma or the EU. The absence of a large counter movement on the Left providing an alternative is self-evident.

The old ruling Hungarian Workers Party metamorphosed seamlessly into the Socialist Party modelling itself on Britain's New Labour Party under Tony Blair.

The discrediting of socialism under the old HSWP has made it difficult for a new party of the Left to emerge. Yet this is essential to stop the continuous drift to the right in the country's politics. The government are hoping that they can see off the threat of Jobbik by occupying their political space. Many in the country believe this to be a dangerous game.

The fear is that a Conservative/Jobbik Coalition will eventually emerge, replicating the pre-war Horthy Regime which was much the same kind of coalition.



# NIGHT OF MUSIC AND POLITICS

Scottish Socialists for Independence (SSI) are holding their launch event on Tuesday 28 May at 7.30pm in St Andrews in the Square, Calton, Glasgow

**Maggie Chetty** reports

**WHY**, you may ask, is anyone setting up another socialist group? The Communist Party of Scotland is only 21 years old, formed in 1992 after the dissolution of the Communist Party of Great Britain. We have always supported Scottish independence.

When the great miners' leader Mick McGahey died, he was a member of the CPS. We have always sought to work with other progressive organisations and to build international solidarity.

But like many communist parties world-wide, we have had difficulty attracting young people and have grown smaller through ill-health and the death of members.

## Dynamism

When the SSP was forming, we did what we could to support it and were full of admiration for its dynamism and very welcome successful election results in 2003.

Since 2004, the CPS has been holding a series of seminars and producing pamphlets as part of the delicate process of trying to build some unity among the left who support independence and socialism in Scotland.

This is a difficult task as the



**KEEP IT RED:**  
it is vital to  
find ways to  
build in to the  
Yes campaign  
socialist  
slogans,  
ideas and  
policies

SSP knows only too well and we have made some modest progress with a regular group who meet us from a range of backgrounds-SNP, socialists, republicans, members of the 1820 Society, the John McLean Society, the Scottish Republican Socialist Movement and ex-Labour Party members.

As the referendum campaign has developed it has become plain that the left must make greater efforts to combat the idea that the independence campaign is only of interest to the SNP who so far have borne the brunt of the attacks by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Alliance and the Southern media.

It is also vital to find ways to build in to the campaign socialist slogans, ideas and policies. Lastly we must find ways to build solidarity, to support and listen to each other.

It is a very exciting time politically. Things are moving very fast and we must seize the moment to encourage people at the grassroots to get involved, to

vote Yes and to consider a very different Scotland - a nation that scraps Trident, doesn't fight foreign wars and develops and protects its public and health sector while guaranteeing a living wage, free social care and education for its citizens.

You can join SSI and be a member of another political group. We are not a political party like the SSP - simply a loose association of organisations and individuals who are hoping that with our particular history, links and networks we will be able to persuade some disillusioned individuals, Labour, SNP or CPGB into working for a Yes vote at this critical time in our history.

• *Speaking at the launch will be Bill Bonnar, SSP national chair; Martha Wardrop, co-convenor Scottish Greens; Bill Ramsay, SNP Trade Union Group; Maggie Lennon, Director of the Bridges Programmes for Asylum Seeker and Migrant communities; and Paul Holleran, NUJ Scottish Organiser*

# Peace Camp update

by Voice Reporter

**A FEW** weeks ago, the present Peace Campers at Faslane released an open letter. It called for all interested in the Camp and its work to find way of finding new campers as all the present people intended to leave. This has been a wake up call to many of us who have supported the Peace Camp in their constant vigil on the doorstep of Faslane Naval Base. After an open meeting, an ultimatum was set, giving new supporters 30 days to find new people who were willing to stay on the camp.

## Future secured

Since then, the open letter has been published all over the world and old and new peace campaigners have joined together establishing the Phoenix Group. Thanks to their efforts it has been announced the future of the Peace Camp is secured for the foreseeable future and definitely until after the 2014 referendum.

Peace Camp spokesperson Leonna O'Neil said:

"We are glad the future of the camp is safe, we all feel it is crucial with the independence referendum we are sorry to leave but have to get on with our lives. We will continue campaigning when we leave here."

Campsie SSP and Acting Strange Theatre Company will be performing at the Camp on Friday 28 June, with special guests including Rosie Kane, Pauline Bradley and Citizen Smart who wrote *The Bedroom Tax Song*. If you are interested in coming along please email Sandra Webster: sandra.webster@yahoo.com