

Scottish workers speak for a “no” vote in independence referendum

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party is campaigning in Scotland, calling for a No vote in the September 18 referendum on independence and for workers and youth to attend our public meetings in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Teams have been working in Glasgow city centre and local high streets and shopping centres and at meetings featuring Deputy Leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Deputy First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, in Kirkcaldy and former Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) leader, Tommy Sheridan, in Cumbernauld.

There has been a warm response to the SEP from those opposed to separation, who have congratulated us for taking the initiative.

At the Clyde shopping centre in Clydebank, Megan, a Travel and Tourism student at West College Scotland, explained, “Amongst my friends we are evenly divided Yes and No in the referendum. I am voting No because I think people need to stand together. I say ‘united we stand, divided we fall.’ The referendum is all about money, about who gets what. I am worried what will happen if we become independent.

“[SNP leader and Scottish First Minister] Alex Salmond and [deputy leader] Nicola Sturgeon are slimier than slugs. They are just as bad as [Prime Minister David] Cameron. They are not telling the truth about what they will do if they become the government in Scotland. What will happen to the poor and homeless? What about my future?”

Mandy, a young unemployed worker, explained, “I am voting No because I have English friends and we have always got on together. What is the point of splitting away? It seems to me the whole independence thing is squabbling over oil and other resources that should belong to everybody. The bad economic situation is making people feel they have to look after

themselves.

“If Scotland goes independent, the same people will still have all the money and want more. It will be us who will suffer. The SNP pretends that it looks after people, but while they have been in government food banks have appeared. You can’t blame that on the English. I have heard there are plans to stop free bus passes and make other cuts, but they are being held back until after the referendum,” Mandy added.

John, who works on the North Sea oil rigs said, “Quite a lot of people working on the rigs say the oil belongs to Scotland, but I argue it’s everyone’s. Actually, the truth is it belongs to the oil corporations.

“I have a son working at the Faslane nuclear submarine base and am worried about him and the thousands of others losing their jobs if the SNP carries out its promise and demands the British government close it down.

“Anyway the fact that the government could declare the base UK territory and seal it off shows how powerless a Scottish government would really be. Also, no one talks about what the United States might do. It’s a vital part of their defence network with American soldiers patrolling around with machine guns.”

Retired worker Lyell described how he had spent all his life in the shipyards and took part in the year-long “work-in” at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in 1971, after the Conservative government refused to provide further financial support and the company went into liquidation. He explained, “At that time we all fought against the government. We got on terrifically with the boys from England.

“The fact that we were united and so determined back then really shook the government. It was so important that we stood together and it showed that was the real way to overcome the bosses. I suppose you could say

we won for a while, but lost in the long run. That was to do with the policy of the shop stewards committee. The shipyards soon went into a steep decline and although they are just about hanging on at BAE Systems, their future is being used like ping-pong by the Yes and No campaigns.

“If Scotland becomes independent there will be a border separating us... not necessarily a physical one but a very real one nevertheless.

“Whatever government is in power they do not worry about ordinary people or what they think. Look what happened in Iraq. No one wanted a war there but they still went ahead.”

Brian, an IT worker in his mid-thirties, came up to an SEP campaign stall at Buchanan Street bus station, declaring, “At last I’ve found a socialist party that says No. I am a socialist and am disgusted that people like Tommy Sheridan and the Scottish Socialist Party are campaigning for a Yes vote. In effect, they are campaigning for the SNP, who are every bit as bad as Cameron and the Tories. It’s obvious a Yes vote will lead to a SNP government, but Sheridan and company spread the false idea that it’s just about becoming independent and not to worry what happens afterwards.

“They also shout on about the problem being in ‘Westminster’ and we have to separate, as if socialist-minded people in the rest of Britain aren’t affected as well. We can work together to get rid of the Tories, like what was done in the past. But not just the Tories. We can work together to get rid of the whole rotten system.

“I hate the way the Yes vote people appeal to emotion, shouting all the time about this is the last chance to build a future for our children and grandchildren. All that patriotism about the rebirth of ‘our’ nation is terrible.

“I blame the Labour Party for the rise in support for the SNP. They never delivered on socialism. I guess they were never really interested in socialism, but always did what the rich wanted. That made people dispirited and accepting of ideas that we—the caring, community-minded Scots—should ditch England and look after ourselves.

“I agree with you about uniting the working class internationally and breaking down borders between them, not creating new ones. It’s obvious the bankers and the multinationals tell governments what to do so it’s laughable that Scotland with its tiny population

will be able to resist them and create a socialist paradise here. The fact that Sheridan already sounds no different to Salmond... they are both singing from the same hymn-sheet... shows he will do what the bankers want him to do after independence as well.”



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