

SEP campaigners oppose Scottish separatism, call for class unity

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

Teams have been campaigning in Glasgow city centre and surroundings, the towns of Paisley, Greenock and Port Glasgow, and at meetings featuring former Labour MP and current Respect MP George Galloway in Motherwell and the Scottish Socialist Party in Kilwinning.

The warm response to the SEP campaign from those opposed to separation has continued, as has the dismay and anger from pseudo-lefts and former Stalinists, who are acting as the midwives for a new Scottish capitalist state.

Medical receptionist Deborah said the “Yes to Independence” campaign is unable to say what will happen to the currency, pensions and the National Health Service with separation. “[Scottish National Party (SNP) leader] Alex Salmond really showed his hand in the debate last week with [Edinburgh South Labour Party MP] Alistair Darling when he was repeatedly asked about what would happen to the currency after independence and he could not give an answer. He kept on saying Scotland would keep the pound, but that’s not up to him.

“I just don’t want to be like Ireland, Iceland and Portugal, tiny countries which crashed and became isolated. Ireland and Iceland were once the shining examples for the SNP. Now Salmond is talking about being like Norway. But the cost of living and taxation there is beyond all comprehension. The SNP talks about free prescription charges and university tuition, but they were not the ones who brought them in.

“There is a lot of talk about the government in Westminster not being one the Scottish people voted

for, but I didn’t vote for Salmond and the SNP [who control the Scottish Parliament]. They also forget that a lot of people in England did not vote for David Cameron and the Conservatives.”

Alan, who works as a chef, said that the Tony Blair Labour government followed by the banking crisis and the resulting unemployment had helped Scottish nationalism to grow.

“People have to stand united in the face of austerity,” he said. “There is plenty of money to solve the problems of unemployment and poverty rather than the crazy idea of creating a new state, new borders and a new army.

“The situation down south is no different to up here. There’s no difference what with the minimum wage and poor wages.”

Hilda, a retired bookkeeper in her nineties, hoped “the younger generation will not be taken in by the arguments of the Scottish nationalists.”

“I was a teenager when the Nazis—the National Socialists—led the world into a world war and the extermination of the Jews” she told us. “The SNP might seem nice and respectable, but their ideas can have all sorts of unexpected consequences.

“I always dreamed after the defeat of Hitler, we would have a much better world. But it only seemed to last a short while before it all got much worse again. Now, we are seeing all sorts of horrible right-wing parties coming to power in Europe. I am really pleased to see you here talking about uniting the working class and not splitting it up.”

Unemployed journalist Rebecca explained that the attitude to independence among her friends was “very mixed”. She said, “The SNP are playing to the left and falsely telling people about some sort of socialist utopia, which is not true. They are telling lies.

“Some of them are taken in by the Labour values the SNP claim to have. But it was the Labour Party which helped the Thatcher government get into power.”

Paul, a recently unemployed forklift truck driver, said, “The way I see it, if we become independent, the people at the top in Scotland will get more control. We don’t get more control. The ordinary people will suffer just the same. We will still be getting the scraps from the table. All we will get is the same people with a different flag pretending to represent you.

“They [the SNP] talk about independence and then want to join the European Union. It’s just a big business union telling everyone what to do. The EU shouts about equality, but it is really about big business taking the pennies and the pounds off you.”

Classroom assistant Jim insisted, “We should all be equal, join together and not be picked apart.

“I don’t think we should be divided into separate groups. It just divides the working class. I know quite a few people from the Scottish Socialist Party, and I told them I am an internationalist, not a nationalist. They can’t justify their support for independence and just say they are internationalist as well. They think independence will create a socialist Scotland and the rest will follow. I don’t believe that at all.

“I have more in common with the working class in Liverpool, Manchester and the south of England than the Scottish ruling class. The same goes for Europe.”

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