

Workers and youth support Socialist Equality Party campaign in opposition to Scottish nationalism

Our reporters

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In the run-up to the referendum vote on Scottish independence on Thursday, campaign teams from the Socialist Equality Party have distributed thousands of copies of the statement “Vote no in the Scottish referendum, fight for a socialist Britain” in working class areas, city centers and universities in Dundee, Edinburgh and other urban areas.

The atmosphere has grown noticeably more polarized and tense as polls show the result is too close to call. In the capital, Edinburgh, seat of the Scottish parliament, **Mark** said he was attracted to the SEP stall by the banner stating, “Fight for a Socialist Britain.” He thought that the financial elite were “so far above the poverty line they don’t understand poverty. Many people who are supposed to be represented by the elite are living in such a dire state of poverty, [they] see no way of getting out of it.”

A young woman, **Moire McLintock**, added, “I think the working class will suffer from this. I feel for the working class in England and everywhere. I don’t want to make a decision that isolates people. Equality is a big thing for me. I want everyone to have an equal opportunity in life, and the lowering of corporation tax as promised by the Scottish National Party (SNP) in an independent Scotland is disgusting. And I don’t think that has been brought up enough.”

Sally Ann, who was born in Ireland said, “Making another boundary goes against the grain. Its international socialism we are talking about not socialism in one country like Stalin used to do. I am voting ‘No’ and I am worried about you guys down in Liverpool and Manchester, and I think the rest of England is going to get it.

“I think you are mounting an effort which is

meaningfully constructed. The official ‘No’ campaign is so negative. There is nothing there, there is no future there.”

Sam, who is studying history, philosophy and English, explained why she is voting no. “I think we will end up in a smaller country, a more bigoted country, where there will be more opportunities for more radical right-wing political parties to come through,” she said.

“A lot of the ‘Yes’ campaign is based on racism, and so called patriotism. It will just bring out a lot of negativity towards other people and other races. They already say things like, ‘I don’t want foreigners to vote in MY Scottish referendum, I don’t want English people, I don’t want to be part of England’.

“I think it’s bringing out a lot of ugliness and nastiness that will leave a vacuum for parties like the BNP [British National Party] and UKIP [United Kingdom Independence Party] to come through.”

Audrey pointed to the role played by pseudo-left groups, such as the Scottish Socialist Party and Radical Independence Campaign, in diverting working class discontent behind nationalism. “They are targeting the poor. If it was just Alex Salmond and the SNP no one would vote for them. But they put it all in glowing colours and make out it will be better [after independence] when it won’t.

“Yes campaigners have been at my door calling for a ‘Yes’ vote every night this week. They are in the street as well. They pressure you to push you into voting yes, but I won’t.”

Jacob, a Canadian student at St. Andrews University, said he has been a regular reader of the *World Socialist Web Site*. “I think it is an absolutely fantastic

publication, it is one of the few that speaks for the working class from an international perspective,” he said. Jacob contrasted the coverage by the WSWS of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, with “the mainstream media”, which “often misrepresent what is happening and ignore or distort what is happening.”

It was clear that a police state was being built in the US, Jacob added. “I believe this referendum ultimately represents a division between the Scottish and English working class. At this time in world history, it is paramount that the working class remains united and remains in solidarity against the global capitalist system.”

SEP supporters in Scotland have participated enthusiastically in the campaign. Care-worker **Sue** said, “You hear the phrase ‘we don’t want to be ruled by Westminster’ a lot during this campaign. Well I don’t want to be ruled by Westminster but I don’t want to be ruled by Holyrood either. The only difference is being exploited by Scottish capitalists.”

“My experience with unions has been a revelation. I have seen first-hand how they help business more than they help their members. The lefts and the unions are getting ready to line their own pockets if the vote goes ‘Yes’. A ‘Yes’ or a ‘No’ vote is not going to improve any working class person’s life. Voting ‘Yes’ will make a few more better off in big business.

“It’s time people came together. Never mind splitting up through a nationalist referendum. We can’t change things through the SNP, Labour or the so-called socialist parties who claim Scotland will be a beacon for the rest of Britain. Socialism can only come about through workers fighting together, internationally, not separating into smaller nations.

“I have read the statement put out by the SEP. I agree with it fully. I intend to join. I believe it is the only party that speaks for me and has a real solution to the basic problems in society.”

Kevin said, “In my view, the referendum campaign serves as a means to further divert, confuse and disorientate those seeking an alternative. What they’re all concealing is the fact that the campaign for Scottish independence is driven by very definite capitalist class interests that are completely opposed and hostile to the interests of the working class.

“At a time in history when working people are facing

the disintegration of the nation state system—the very foundation of capitalism—[and] deeper economic and military conflicts, the right wing pro-business SNP and the fake lefts that are in its orbit are promoting the thoroughly criminal illusion that the creation of a new state offers a genuine solution to the assaults on living standards.

“[Former Scottish Socialist Party leader] Tommy Sheridan and the rest of the rotten rump that constitutes the fake left are working feverishly to divert the working class away from its historic tasks of building new political organizations to settle accounts with capitalism, down the reactionary dead end of nationalism.

“The working class can have no confidence in these social forces. All of them have been transformed by events into nothing more than bourgeois politicians, all vying for the prospects of the well paid privileged positions that will be on offer in the event of a new capitalist state being brought into existence.

“The working class needs to reject the poison of Scottish nationalism and rediscover its international socialist traditions and take up the fight to build new organisations that uncompromisingly represent its own class interests.”

For further information about the SEP’s campaign visit: www.socialquality.org.uk



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