

Britain's fake-left groups seek permanent nationalist alliance in Scotland

Chris Marsden, Julie Hyland
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The *Sunday Herald* has revealed that a section of the Scottish National Party (SNP) is urging a “joint pro-independence platform with the Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP).” This comes in the aftermath of last week’s defeat of the referendum on Scottish independence by 55 percent to 45 percent.

The newspaper disclosed leaked emails from three SNP members of the Scottish Parliament who want to contest the 2015 British General election as “either a ‘Yes Alliance’ or a ‘Scotland Alliance.’”

The three MSPs are Gordon MacDonald, Joan McAlpine and Chic Brodie. Brodie, a former Liberal Democrat, writes that the basis of the alliance is the SNP government’s White Paper for independence. He suggests that “although we recognise that individual candidates might deviate on some issues,” this is “healthy so long as the overriding agreed policy is to sustain Scottish independence.”

The *Herald* suggests that there could be difficulties in forming a cross-party alliance, given that the SNP is “in favour of the market economy,” the SSP is “anti-capitalist,” and the Greens want to reduce Scotland’s reliance on oil, which runs contrary to the economic basis of the independence agenda.

As far as the fake-left groups are concerned, however, the three MSPs will be kicking at an open door.

A de facto alliance between the SNP, the major voice of Scottish capitalism, and the middle class nationalists of the fake-left already exists. The SSP, Tommy Sheridan’s “Solidarity,” the Socialist Party (SP), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Radical Independence Campaign all lined up behind the SNP in the Yes campaign, proclaiming separatism as the only basis on which to oppose austerity and militarism.

In the wake of the Yes defeat, they have made clear that this should be made permanent. The only point of

contention is whether this “broad” nationalist alliance should be led by the SNP or have a more nominally independent and “left” form.

The unfortunately-named Socialist Party of England and Wales (SPEW) is so named because their former Scottish supporters split to form the SSP on the basis of embracing separatism and building their careers at Holyrood. Their post-referendum statement speaks of the Yes campaign as a “working class revolt against austerity,” before asserting, “Many of these angry and energized people can be won to socialism and a new mass working class party in Scotland.”

Bemoaning the No vote, they argue, “Had a mass working class party existed, it could have mobilized far greater support for a Yes vote based on a clear policy to end austerity, for public ownership, a living wage, etc.”

In other words, the only purpose of a “mass working class party” is to serve as a vehicle to sell nationalism to a working class that refused to believe the lies of the SNP.

The SP admits as much when it writes that a key reason why “some workers did vote No” was the “lack of confidence in the SNP leadership’s proposals for an independent Scotland, which were predicated on a continuation of capitalism and no clear end to cuts.” It continues that “most people, when polled, believed that Scotland and their own families would be worse off economically under the SNP version of independence.”

The SWP takes the same line, placing its emphasis on the hostility among workers to the Labour Party to reinforce the claim that the Yes campaign was a working class movement. With references to the Yes campaign not being motivated by “narrow nationalism,” but rather by a perspective of building a Scotland “that does not join imperialist war, that rejects the priorities of big business and the rich,” etc., they

seek to cover up the fact that the Yes campaign, which they fully supported, was for an independent capitalist Scotland that would remain in both NATO and the European Union.

The complaint over Labour aligning itself with the Tories in the “Better Together” campaign and “wrapping itself in the Union Jack” is rank hypocrisy. As recently as last May, the author of the SWP’s post-referendum article, Charlie Kimber, was yet again urging a Labour vote in the European elections on the basis that it is “still not the same as the Tories” and retains a link to the trade unions.

This is more than mere double book keeping. With the exception of the SSP, which has made contempt for the English working class the basis of its existence, these are groups that operate on an all-UK basis. Yet the Scottish referendum has seen them virtually abandon any pretence of offering a perspective for the working class in England and Wales.

Scottish nationalism is now portrayed as the sole viable alternative to the Westminster elite and its pro-business agenda. To the extent that anything is said about England, it consists of urging workers south of the border to trust in the trade unions. Even here, workers are to be divided along national lines. English workers are asked to support a demonstration by the Trades Union Congress set for October 18, while those in Scotland are urged to line up behind the protest organized by the Scottish Trades Union Congress on the same day.

The divisive character of their politics is made explicit by the SWP, which politely suggests that a new “left” party might also include some workers who voted No. That they did so “doesn’t mean they are scabs,” it writes.

The fact that the SWP feel the need to make such a public caution is indicative of the poisonous levels of nationalism within fake-left circles. Their hostility to the unity of the working class, with denunciations of “scabs,” “dupes,” “cowards,” “traitors” and worse, is common coin within the nationalist circles in which the SWP is fishing for support so as to find a place at the table.

Paralleling the discussion on a new nationalist party is the launching of an internet campaign known as the “Spirit of 45.”

Promoted as a means of keeping the “reality of a free

and independent Scotland alive,” the authors of the campaign present “45” as a reference to the percentage that voted Yes. But everyone involved knows full well the allusion is to 1745 and the Jacobite Rebellion for the restoration of the Stuart monarchy under Bonnie Prince Charlie. This is now routinely portrayed as part of Scotland’s historic struggle against English colonialism.

All the leading figures and professional academics grouped around the nationalist tendencies will step up their efforts at historical revisionism, attempting to recast Scotland as an oppressed nation and attributing to the working class the historic responsibility for securing its “self-determination.”

The fake-left groups have repudiated any prospect of a unified struggle for socialism in Britain. As the Socialist Equality Party insisted during the referendum campaign, if such a struggle is impossible in the UK, it is impossible everywhere.

Having embraced nationalism in Scotland, these groups are emerging ever more openly as right-wing tendencies. They seek the atomization of the working class and its paralysis in the face of the class enemy.

It will not be long before they jump into similar alliances with regional capitalist cliques south of the border. Already, all the major parties, not least Labour, are busy advancing English nationalism as well as strategies for “regional devolution” in the northern counties, supposedly as a necessary response to the “privileges” now enjoyed by Scotland and Wales.



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