

Tommy Sheridan's "Hope over Fear": Cheerleaders for the Scottish National Party

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There was something both faintly ludicrous and deeply cynical about Saturday's "Hope over Fear" rally in George Square, Glasgow.

This was the high-point of the campaign waged by Tommy Sheridan, head of the all but defunct Solidarity Scotland group, for everyone to "lend their vote" to the Scottish National Party (SNP).

However, there were precious few among the crowd who had any intention of doing anything other than to wholeheartedly *give* their vote to the SNP—with no intention of ever taking it back again.

This was to all intents an SNP rally, albeit one organised by Sheridan with the assistance of the Stalinist-led Common Weal and Sheridan's political errand boys in the Socialist Workers Party. But their supporters were in a small minority among the several thousand assembled Scottish nationalists. A sea of Saltires, Lion Rampant Scottish royal flags and a handful of Catalan and Palestinian flags was undisturbed by a single red flag—as would have been the case a few years ago.

Everyone waved the nylon Saltires being freely distributed in time with various nationalist songs, including at least two versions of "Flower of Scotland," urging Scots to rise against the English as they had against Edward II at Bannockburn so as to be a nation "once again".

No one gathered apparently saw any conflict between this and Sheridan's declaration that "Hope over Fear" was not "anti-English". One wonders what they thought would be the impact of an equivalent demonstration in which English workers sang "God Save the Queen" and solidarised with its verse on the need to crush the "Rebellious Scots."

But no one was in a politically critical frame of mind, least of all the couple of hundred pseudo-lefts in the

crowd who have long ago sold their political soul to the SNP and Scottish nationalism. The SWP's only comment on the rally was a "Party Notes" statement reading, "The Hope over Fear rally in George's Square will be big." After all, that is all that really counts, isn't it?

A few SWP placards were carried, usually by people covered in SNP badges and sometimes wearing SNP T-shirts.

Sheridan acted as master of ceremonies, introducing both speakers and musical performers.

His own remarks were an extended election broadcast for the SNP. "Hope over fear is designed to get Scotland to stand under one banner on May 7", he said. Use "your vote on May 7 for the anti-austerity party, the anti-Trident party, the anti-establishment party. The vote that will count on May 7 is a vote for the SNP on May 7." "On May 7 to the Yes Community, in particular, we appeal to you...lend your vote to the SNP on May 7", etc., etc.

His political abasement before the SNP is total. Indeed the very next day, Hope over Fear's Facebook page led with a segment from Saturday's Channel 4 News broadcast that began with SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon's visit to Glasgow city centre—where she attracted larger crowds than had gathered in "Freedom Square."

When Channel 4 moved on to show shots of George Square, the presenter, with obvious irony, noted that an event calling for an SNP vote was organised by "Glasgow socialist Tommy Sheridan." "We are still on the road to independence," barked Sheridan, as if addressing the masses rather than an interviewer's microphone. "We've had to take a wee detour. We are going via Westminster", he said—for the umpteenth time.

Sheridan is taking no detour. He is following his own political career path into the SNP, which he has already proclaimed to be the “mass workers’ party” he has supposedly dedicated his life to building.

“Hope over Fear” is a political adjunct of the SNP election campaign, through which Sheridan hopes to prove the value of his service—initially by boosting various SNP candidates and lending them false left credentials while hoping to eventually be accepted into his party of choice and to renew his stalled career in the Scottish parliament.

Everyone involved is working deliberately to divide the working class in the face of their common capitalist enemy, whether that enemy gathers under the Union Flag or the Saltire. They will all share direct responsibility for the attacks made by the SNP on workers in Scotland, involving billions of pounds in cuts, and for working to ensure that political hostility to the Labour and Tory agenda of austerity and militarism is channelled behind the main party of capitalism, north of the border.



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