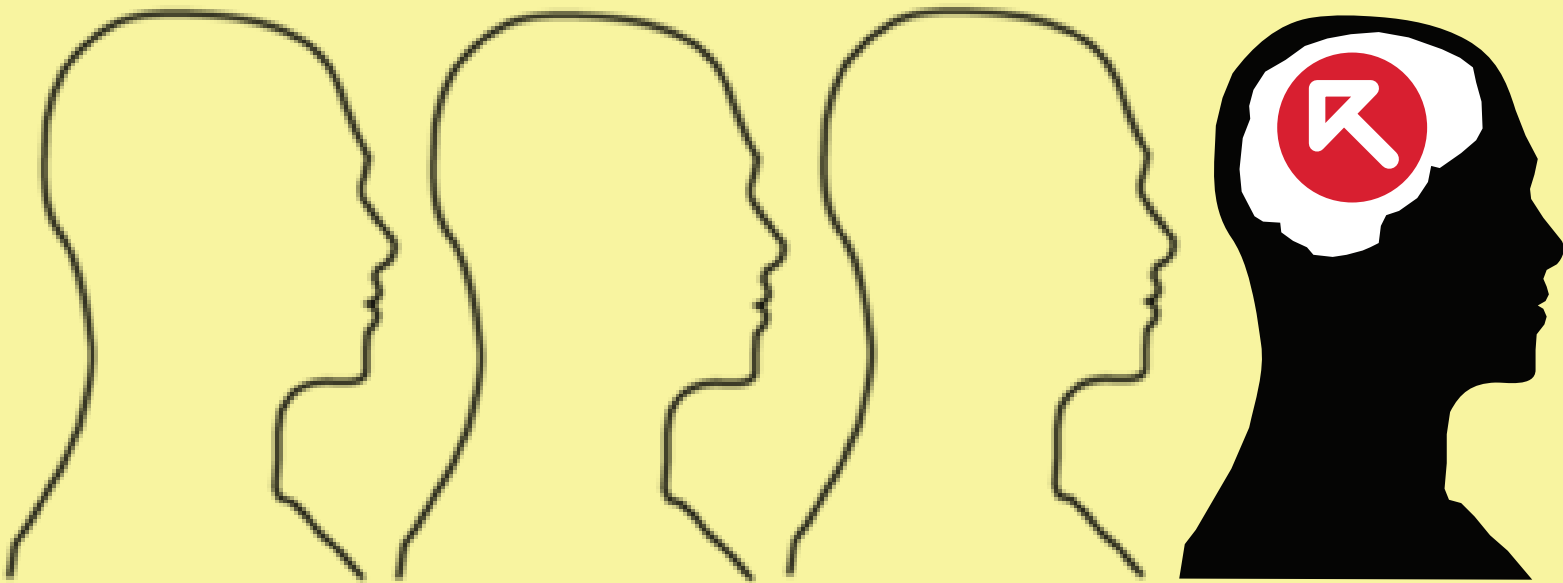


# Scottish **Left** Review

Issue 66 September/October 2011 £2.00

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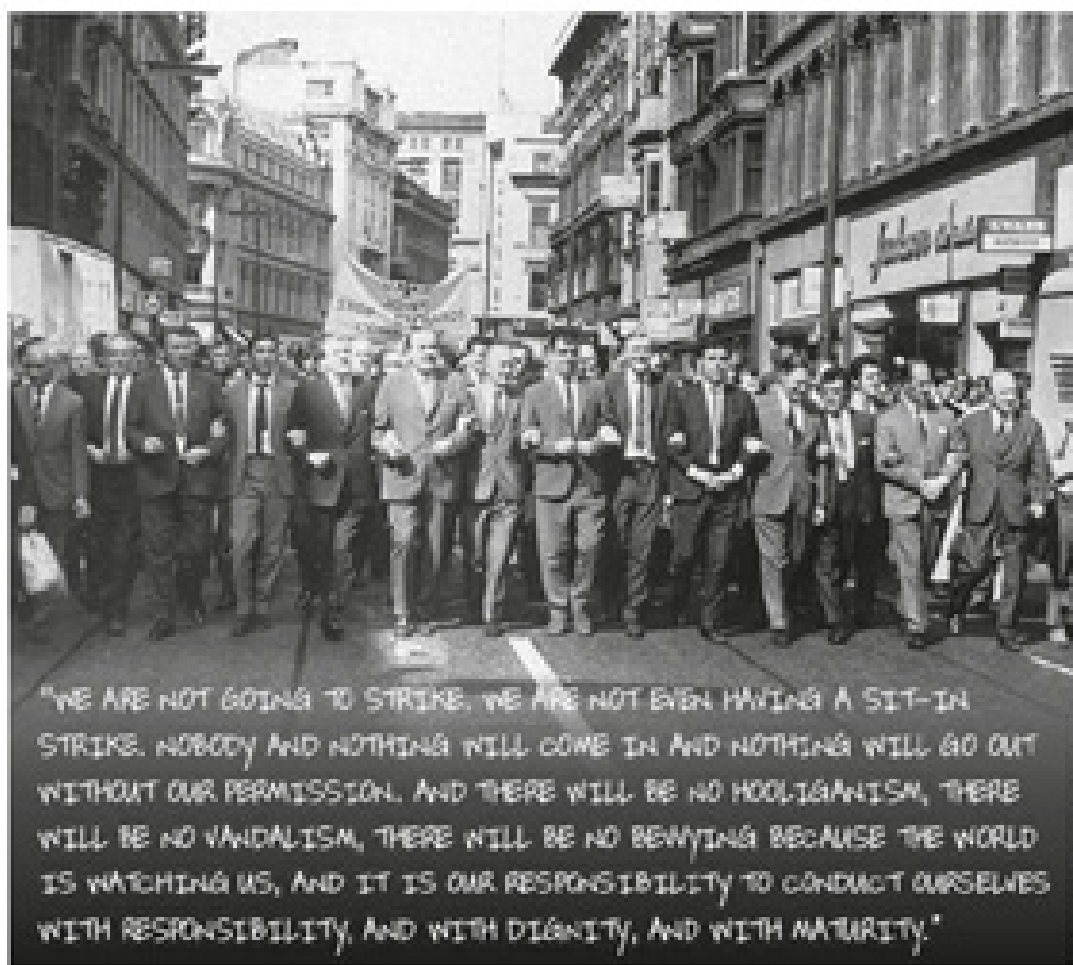


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# Scottish Left Review

Issue 66 September/October 2011

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Printed by: PrintIt Xpress Ltd, 34 High St., Linlithgow, EH49 7AE

## Comment

In 1999 Jimmy Reid proposed that there should be a journal which would provide a focus for left-wing thinking in Scotland. After discussions with a wide range of people on the left, the Scottish Left Review was born. It's first issue came out in 2000 and more than a decade later we're on our 66th issue.

But when the SLR was conceived it was intended to be something more than just a magazine. In the late 1990s the internet was still comparatively new and for a lot of people it was not yet clear how it could be used or what difference it would make to political debate. The intention was that it would launch as primarily a web-based publication but with hard copies printed for those who did not have internet access. And it was expected that as use of the web changed, the SLR would change with it.

And the Scottish Left Review was also seen as something more than just a collection of writing. In fact, in Jimmy's original thinking it would be something more akin to a movement, organising events and championing causes.

So it was to be a magazine, a network and a movement.

What it has become (we hope) is a successful and interesting magazine producing thought-provoking writing every two months. The redesign of the website earlier this year was designed to emphasise that the SLR is indeed very much a magazine and has not become a blog or a 'rolling news' site. We pick a theme for the magazine carefully and we try to assemble an enlightening set of four or five articles on that theme to explore it from a number of different angles, with another half-dozen off-theme articles submitted or commissioned on current or important issues. And we hope you have found this useful and worth reading.

But as regular readers will be aware, we have come to recognise that there remains just as much of a need to step in and influence Scottish politics as when the SLR was first established. Of course, there is now a wide range of different online news sites, blogs and forums in the area of left/green politics and the Scottish Left Review is proud to work with many of them. And there have been a number of attempts to generate a left

movement in Scotland.

And this has all brought both successes and failures. So there is a lot of lively debate and Scotland is well served with centre-left political parties. And there is real enthusiasm now more than ever for alternative policy options as accepting that the old order has failed is now the mainstream view, and at the same time the mainstream is as small-c conservative as it ever was and those responsible for the failures continue to leave footprints all over the Scottish political agenda which are entirely out of proportion to the minority position they hold.

What we believed was missing was a strong think-tank and advocacy group to generate new thinking and then to promote it. And so in August, on the first anniversary of Jimmy's death, we launched the Jimmy Reid Foundation. Hopefully it will begin to fulfill some of the roles Jimmy himself envisaged for the Scottish Left Review. But above all, hopefully it can start to both build an alternative agenda for Scotland and bring people together in support of it.

But there is one thing right at the front of our minds in establishing the Foundation – and that is that we will only be as successful as the new thinking we create. In the near future we will have a fully-functioning website in place and the many people in Scotland who share our desire to see a new direction will be able to become part of a network which we hope will help to shape the agenda of the Foundation.

The Foundation has set six core principles to help us guide the work that it does:

- **That society should be based on equality and social justice.** This above all is the principle which has been furthest from the political agenda in the last two decades. The idea of 'social justice' was transformed (especially by Tony Blair) to mean something like 'an equal chance of being unequal'. The idea that if we all have an equal right to gain a disproportionate share of the wealth then equality has been achieved is simply ridiculous. It is not how we arrive at injustice that is the question but whether we arrive there at all. Refocussing policy on not just equality of

process but greater equality of outcome will be a major task of the Foundation.

- **That people should have the democratic power to influence their workplace and social institutions.** We have drifted into a view of the world around us that suggests our role is only to influence through the money we spend. The 1990s concept of 'lifestyle marketing' tried to persuade us that it was what we did in our private life that fulfilled us and that 'social life' was just something we were subjected to. So the idea of having a say in how the institutions that surround us work is now seen as both radical and an obscure minority pursuit. We have to rekindle the idea that everything



## The Jimmy Reid Foundation

from our colleges and universities to our workplace or the bodies which manage our resources and amenities should respond to our views. We have to redemocratised our lives.

- **That quality of life should be at the forefront of political debate and not an afterthought.** Where we have heard talk of quality of life in recent years it has always been about our ability to 'buy happiness' ("contentedness for me is three foreign holidays"). But quality of life is about much more than this. Why is it that when we meet our friends we all talk about how hard we find it to balance work and a rewarding home life. So why is this not seen as a political priority?
- **That justice can only come from peace and support for human rights.** Locally, nationally, internationally, we know that we cannot expect to create a sense of justice without recognising that this stems from the absence of violence and from the basic human expectations of fairness which are best understood as the 'human rights' agenda. Everywhere in mainstream politics you will find those who argue that justice is somehow compatible with violence and the domination of one over

the other. This must be challenged relentlessly.

- **That ideas, learning, arts and culture have the power to transform society and individuals.** Again, how is it that arts, culture and education and ideas have become simple, functional concepts linked to our ability to gain employment or to the ability to generate profit? Scotland has been no better than the UK as a whole in celebrating ideas and culture as transformative elements of everyday life. This must change.
- **That all these principles are underpinned by the importance of national identity and a vision for Scotland.** There may remain some disagreement about the

constitution among those on the left and centre left but that must not mean that we lose sight of the importance of 'nation'.

As a collective expression of individuals against

transnational forces and as a focus for distinctive cultures the nation remains an important force in politics. We must not be afraid of national identity; indeed, we must seek to use it as a force for good.

These are the issues we expect to take up much of the time of the Foundation, but as yet they remain only principles. We will work hard to convert these into a full policy agenda. To begin the process, in this issue we have asked six writers to consider what these might mean for the sorts of policies and research the Foundation will work on.

But the Foundation is not a silo in which the same group of people talk to each other indefinitely. We hope it will become a focus for many people who want to express their own views on the way forward for Scotland and the wider world. So what do you think? What policies and ideas would you like to see the Foundation pursue? We'd love to hear from you – send your thoughts to [contact@reidfoundation.org](mailto:contact@reidfoundation.org).

It is 40 years since the work-in at the Upper Clyde Shipyard changed the nature of the debate in Scotland. While many of today's activists will have no memory of that momentous event, we hope that in its own way what we have begun can also change the nature of the debate – and change the nature of Scotland and its politics. ■

# National Union of Journalists

NUJ Scotland are delighted to be associated with the 40th Anniversary of the UCS work-in.

Workers in our industry face a similar fight for survival as the shipyard unions in their historic struggle. Newspapers are being run down through mismanagement on a massive scale as fat cat directors asset-strip and drive down quality journalism. A robust, independent Scottish Press is an essential part of our future and we call on the trade union and progressive forces of this country to join our campaign for a better press and media free from the malpractices and abuses of recent times.

Jimmy Reid a proud NUJ member said in 1982: *"A lot of people working in Fleet Street seem to believe powerful entrepreneurs will always be on hand to pick up the tab and pay out millions of pounds each year for the privilege of owning a prestigious newspaper like The Times or the Observer.*

*This is Cloud Cuckoo Land. Sooner or later, these guys will get fed up doling out money. The cost will exceed the prestige and they'll simply pull the plug. It could happen next week or next year.*

*One thing is absolutely certain: if present circumstances continue, it will happen.*

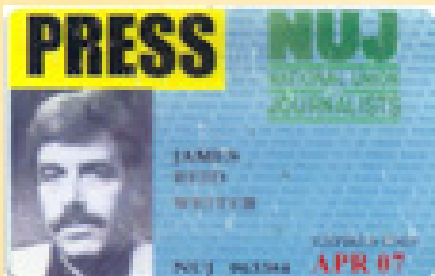
*The trend of newspaper closures will continue and that prospect is frightening to any democrat.*

*Democracy means the right to vote. It also means that people should have access to the information from which they draw conclusions as to how they shall vote.*

*Fewer newspapers means less choice.*

## NUJ CAMPAIGNING

- Standing up for the BBC and public service broadcasting
- Opposing exploitation of work experience and interns
- Fighting for fairer employment laws and trade union rights
- Calling for stronger copyright laws
- Organising to save jobs and for better pay and conditions
- Demanding a stop to murder of journalists around the world
- Promoting press and broadcasting freedom
- Campaigning for an independent Press Commissioner
- Working towards workplaces free from bullying and stress
- Educating members in literacy and journalistic standards
- Acting in solidarity against fat cat publishers
- Backing exiled journalists facing deportation
- Supporting lifelong learning through SULF



*NUJ Scotland National Organiser Paul Holleran  
NUJ Scottish Executive Chair James Doherty*

# An Unequal Share of Life

When England's riots exploded, coalition ministers had plenty to say. David Cameron, for one, climbed the pulpit to announce that a section of society was 'sick'. Nick Clegg denounced 'sheer criminality'. Others found alternative verses on the hymn sheet: apathetic parents, modern education, mere greed, the absence – despite the best efforts of the Met – of 'discipline' and 'respect'. It was a long list. Certain items were even plausible.

One arose from the realisation that the looters possessed a keen eye for a logo and a brand. They were not, by their lights, after just any old rubbish, far less life's essentials. They were scorning – and torching – the rights of property in pursuit of designer labels and big-ticket electronic gear. Here was a shocking example, many said, of where 'me too' consumerism could lead. What the mobs couldn't afford, they simply stole.

Had an outraged press and public paused to think for a second, they might

anyone from asking how a couple – let's call them the Camerons – came by an unearned fortune estimated at £30 million while teenagers were being raised to set their communities ablaze for the sake of TVs and training shoes.

I labour the point. I could labour it a bit more with the entirely obvious observation that cities in England fell to rioting only after the entire country had been looted by its financial sector, that no punishments then followed, and that a sudden lack of wherewithal was accepted as a perfectly decent excuse for the episode.

But the laboured point has a few nuances. The coalition's eager budgetary response to the aftermath of the banking crisis will serve only to widen Britain's already vast inequalities. Are riots now a price worth paying? 'Deficit reduction' will also stifle the consumerism that is deemed essential, when it isn't merely wicked or sick, to Britain's economy. Sometimes it's our patriotic duty to lust

sector dedicated to a unique brand of redistribution, offered trickle-down and the mantra of wealth creation.

Scotland didn't riot this summer. As one who doubts the collective wisdom of the mob, I'm glad about that. On the other hand, I couldn't say exactly why our cities escaped the upheavals. The SNP government made soothing noises about social cohesion, but I'm not sure that an egalitarian tradition, real as it may be, guarantees much. If anything, Scotland's tradition should have produced a blind rage of its own, given the coalition's behaviour and our own unspeakable inequalities. But then, we generally keep our urban poor a long way from city centres. I grew up in a housing scheme: geography also makes a political point.

I also grew up in a scheme when other points were being made. Since the purpose of this piece is to offer a few policy ideas, it is worth remembering what those were. In this days, inequalities were narrowing as if, so it appeared, by magic. Full employment was almost a reality. Access to decent housing had become regarded, in Scotland at least, as a right. An underlying purpose of the NHS was to eradicate the most fundamental inequality of all, the one involving life and death. Education to all levels was taken to be a common good, and more than a privilege.

Dismantle all that, and what remains? Once dismantled, how could these things be restored? If research is the purpose, you could begin with a single case: to what extent has there been a connection between the growth in inequalities and the assault on council housing? Thatcher promised a 'property-owning democracy', you may recall. Self-evidently, if inequality is the measure, the promise was hollow. Millions were left behind in the property mania; more were damaged when their private bubbles burst. Is that one way of understanding economic inequality?

For the coming generation, it connects with jobs. For close to one million 18- to 24-year-olds in Britain, the largest group on the list of those officially unemployed, there is no work, no chance of a first step on a fast-disappearing 'property ladder', and a



have wondered about that. Disquisitions on materialism are always with us, but so are the poor, whatever you think poverty 'means' in modern Britain. The coalition's rhetorical barrage had one overriding purpose: to avoid or suppress any suggestion that inequality played any part in the riots.

Better to throw a council tenant – guilty of no actual crime – out of her home, the better to improve her parenting skills. Better to sentence a young woman to five months inside for possession of a pair of shorts, deportation being, sadly, no longer available. The objective was at all costs to prevent

after widescreen TVs.

Income inequalities in Britain have been widening since the 1970s. They narrowed briefly, ironically enough, when John Major was in power. Under Tony Blair, they resumed their Thatcherite pattern. While Gordon Brown tried to micromanage the problem with tax credits and such – there was some success, to be fair, with child poverty – Peter Mandelson was boasting of his "intensely relaxed" attitude towards the "filthy rich". The peer-in-waiting seemed to think that was funny. The fact remained that new Labour in government, busily applauding a banking

Ian Bell sees in the recent riots the clear fingerprints of Britain's inequality and while Scotland may have avoided the violence it is just as afflicted by the unfairness. What can be done?

diminishing chance of a house of any sort. That group alone would account for a piece of research.

Do they ask this question: rather than fighting inequality, are we not presiding over its growth for another generation? What's egalitarian about a Scotland that cannot provide a job or a house or an economic hope for a young adult? And what might be the consequences? Can we even guarantee, for much longer, that those who achieve higher education will be spared the vast debts – an engineered inequality – wished on England?

Scotland's health inequalities are a matter of record. Less plain, though long suspected, are their connections with the

**I couldn't say exactly why our cities escaped the riots. If anything, Scotland's tradition should have produced a blind rage of its own, given the coalition's behaviour and our own unspeakable inequalities.**

disappearance of good housing, a belief in full employment, and a commitment to education for all. We assume that these things go together (as surely they must). But how, and in what manner? Health campaigns have failed. Talk of a 'booze culture' is glib, even if the SNP's best efforts received disgraceful 'opposition' from Labour. The phenomenon of the dying Scot runs deeper than a smoking cessation campaign has ever reached.

We know, though, that the poorest smoke more, drink more, and grow fatter. But smart talk of 'the soft bigotry of low expectations' fails to explain why people, rational people, people who have

heard all the advice, kill themselves, or at least gain an unequal share of life.

All my rhetorical questions make assumptions. They are, if you like, old-fashioned assumptions. But they rest on simple correlations. In terms of Westminster policy we have passed through 40 years in which radically-altered official attitudes towards housing, employment, education and the NHS have coincided with steadily increasing inequality. In that same period, the richest – who do not riot – have seized their chance, rendering themselves ungovernable and untouchable, maintaining all the while that their every deed was for the common good.

Few believe that now. To prosecute the case, nevertheless, we need to establish just how inequality functions. The moral argument is, or should be, easy enough to make. The point is to show the how and why of an ancient proposition: that what is bad for some is bad for all. Lethal for the national economy of Scotland, too. But that's another story. ■

■ *Ian Bell is a writer*

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# The Importance of Nation

It is now abundantly clear that there are fundamental problems with the current world economic order – as those on the Left have been arguing for years. The key doctrine of globalisation advocated by neoliberals can now be seen as a means of transferring command of more of the world's resources to those willing and able to play the system, while producing only limited benefits to many poor countries. In this article we will look at some of the issues which need to be addressed in tackling the current problems.

The paradox of globalisation is that, while nations have been stripped of powers under GATT and WTO, nevertheless the nation has the final inescapable responsibility when things go wrong, as recent events clearly demonstrate. We will argue that this position of responsibility without power is untenable, and that redressing the failures of globalisation will inevitably involve redefining the role and powers of the nation state. We will not presume to offer solutions to all the world's problems: but we will give pointers as to how important progress could be made in at least one key area.

The symptoms of the current world economic malaise are frighteningly apparent. To name just a few:

- There are grotesque and increasing disparities of wealth between different social groups, in both the 'advanced' and 'emerging' economies.
- The world financial system is such that many of the major banks and institutions are technically insolvent on any realistic valuation of their asset bases – and are only propped up by government-organised cheap credit; that is effectively by governments printing money.
- Many of the states with advanced economies have levels of debt which mean that some form of sovereign default is virtually inevitable.
- The problems in the eurozone are so severe that it will either break up, ushering in an era of unfathomable chaos, or else some form of European superstate will emerge, to impose a disastrous regime of fiscal discipline upon the European periphery.

These are the symptoms: but with all this economic chaos going on, the political elite in the US and in Europe seem incapable of rising to the challenge, either of developing a coherent course of action, or of bringing the electorate with them. In the US, the body politic seems to be fatally riven into two camps. In Europe, the basic problem is that the mechanisms which have been set up would require further fiscal, social, and political integration if they were going to have any chance of working: but this was not in the original prospectus, and further integration does not address the problem of underlying structural imbalances.

While the causes of the debacle are more difficult, an important role has clearly been played by the undue trust which has been placed in some of the tenets of the neoliberal consensus: and these tenets can now be seen to be fallacious. Among these fallacies is the belief in the invisible hand, and that markets, if largely left to themselves, provide optimum outcomes. Another fallacy is that the increased volume of trade and capital flows stemming from globalisation lead to a sustainable increase in economic activity benefiting all countries. There is also the mistaken belief that monetary unions are instruments of convergence: in other words, if a monetary union is set up covering a group of countries which have achieved some adequate degree of initial convergence, then their economies will move forward in increasingly close economic harmony. (In fact, the opposite is the case – since the reduced number of adjustment mechanisms in a monetary union, which are primarily labour and capital flows, tend to be disequilibrating rather than equilibrating.)

The world economy is so

fundamentally broken that it is going to be no easy task to put the bits together again in a more workable fashion. We will argue that to redress the problems an essential role has to be played by the nation state, and that there has to be renewed focus on those functions which the nation is uniquely positioned to perform. But first, it seems clear that any solution should satisfy most, if not all, of the following requirements if it is going to have a chance of success:

- That there should be protection from the corrosive effects of uncontrolled flows of capital on exchange rates and industry.
- That there should be some form of protection (not necessarily tariff protection), for local industry, so that it cannot be killed off by dumping, or simply taken over and shipped off shore. But that this should be smart protection

– that is, we do not want protective measures which simply encourage inefficiency.

- That there should be suitable arrangements in place to encourage stewardship of basic resources, (that is, resources like land, water, renewable and non-renewable energy and landscape). Such stewardship should provide an appropriate balance between the needs of national and international interests: and between the needs of current and future generations.
- That monetary policy should be such that it suits the requirements of each area: that is, interest rates should be set with local (in some sense) requirements in mind, leaving aside for the moment exactly what is meant by 'local'.
- That there should be mechanisms in place which can be called upon, if necessary, to correct imbalances

**We propose a charter which states that the natural resources of a nation are the inalienable property of that nation, which are held in trust for the mutual benefit of that nation, the entire world, and future generations**

Jim and Margaret Cuthbert argue that many of the problems facing both Scotland and the world could be tackled – but only if nations are willing to exert their power on markets.

in the distribution of income, either between areas, or different social groups

- And finally, that there should be an effective set of accounting arrangements in place – particularly for governments and the financial sector. These should take a prudent and conservative view on when governments and financial institutions are operating solvently.

The theme of this article is that the nation state will have to play a fundamental role if these requirements are to be delivered. But first, what do we mean by nation?

A standard definition would be a geographical entity which possesses sovereignty on decisions like defence, on the operation of the key economic levers, and citizenship. This is fine as far as it goes: but for present purposes, we would argue that a nation proper is defined not just in terms of sovereignty, but that it must also possess some concept of coherence. This is a rather tenuous concept: but a working definition

might be that a nation must possess political mechanisms which are capable of arriving at a view on major issues which is accepted by the bulk of the population as expressing the collective will of the people. On this basis, Europe, for example, is not a nation: the UK increasingly fails to satisfy the concept of coherence: but as regards Scotland, one of the gratifying aspects of devolution is the extent to which Holyrood is increasingly regarded as expressing the collective will of the people – in other words, Scotland is, increasingly, a nation.

Going back to the above wish list, it is remarkable how many of the items on that list can only hope to be delivered at the level of what we have defined as a nation. For example, control of monetary policy for an area, including the ability to set interest rates, requires a currency. And this requires, not just a printing press, but the ability to back that currency with the political will, institutions, and revenues of a state. In the context of the European Union, because of the terms of the anti-competitiveness directives, the

ability to control fiscal policy, industrial policy, and competition policy, are all greatly restricted at the sub-national level, as compared with the individual member state level.

As regards stewardship of basic resources, mismanagement tends to occur when the scale of the resource does not fit well with the scale of the sovereign unit. This can, of course, take place when the scale of the resource is too large, and no-one takes responsibility – global warming, or pollution of the seas are examples. But there are also acute problems when the geographical resource is small relative to the state, and the state therefore regards the resource as expendable. Classic examples would be the UK's virtual surrender of Scotland's fisheries as a price worth paying for EU entry. Or indeed, the UK's decision under Margaret Thatcher to treat North Sea oil as a consumable – a decision which would have been unthinkable if Scotland had been in charge.

Finally, the use of transfer or fiscal mechanisms is likely to be possible only



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if the 'coherence' test of nationhood is met. A classic example is the refusal of Germany and the northern European states to consider transfers to compensate for fundamental imbalances in the eurozone.

So what sort of steps can be taken, given the magnitude of the problems the world faces? To see what might be done, we want to look in more detail at one specific area – namely, the question of the stewardship of natural resources.

The first important step that we suggest needs to be taken is to redefine the rights of a nation in respect of its basic resources. What we propose is that a charter should be developed which states that the natural resources of a nation are the inalienable property of that nation, which are held in trust for the mutual benefit of that nation, the entire world, and future generations. Establishing such a charter would immediately, and fundamentally, change the terms upon which natural resources are exploited. Outright privatisation of resources would be impossible. This does not mean that the private sector, and private capital, would never be involved in developing and exploiting the resources of a state: but the private sector would play a different role. Instead of capital being involved as the owner of privatised resources, henceforward, capital would be involved as a partner in the development and exploitation, under agreed terms, of a resource whose ultimate ownership would remain with the state.

Secondly, where the state is dealing with private sector operators in the field of basic utilities (like water, or energy), the state needs to do more to formalise and exploit the strength of its own bargaining position. In the face of a major corporation, the individual is virtually powerless: but the state is not. In particular, the state in principle controls the right of the corporation to enter the market at all: and for this right the state should be able to extract a significant price.

Third, there needs to be a rethink of the way in which capital is provided for investment in major utility projects. At present, in a typical UK utility, the customer pays a double penalty for the cost of the capital involved in the utility. First, because the utility borrows from the market at a higher cost than the state could borrow. Secondly, as a result of the arcane current cost method which utility regulators use to work out the charge for capital, utility operators earn

a windfall profit on capital invested, over and above the cost of borrowing. In fact, if we are operating at the relatively large scale of a nation, these extra layers of cost are redundant. At national scale, the requirement for capital investment in a utility is largely stable in real terms from year to year. This immediately removes one of the basic reasons for borrowing: namely, to smooth out lumpy capital payments over time. In the absence of this smoothing requirement, the cheapest approach, from the point of view of the consumer, is to fund capital direct from customer charges. Moving to such a system would cut out both the interest cost premium, and the current cost charging premium, which consumers currently pay. It would also protect investment in vital infrastructure from the vagaries of the capital market. (It might be objected that this approach would lead to misallocation of resources, since it would remove the opportunity cost function which payment of interest on capital provides: but there is no reason why customer financed capital could not have a shadow interest rate applied.)

Implementing the above three proposals would transform the way in which basic resources are managed, and in which utility services are delivered. If the proposals were implemented, then the natural relationship would be for the private sector to enter into time-limited relationships with the state, whereby the private sector would be able to manage the exploitation of a basic resource for a specific time, and to a specified extent – and for a defined benefit to both the private sector and the state. Ultimate ownership and control would rest with the state. And the need for investment of private capital, and hence reliance on the financial markets, would be much reduced.

We have taken the area of stewardship of resources as one particular example of what needs to be done. Some of the ideas we developed in that context could in fact be applied more widely. For example, we argued that the state should derive economic benefit in its dealings with individual corporations by extracting an economic rent from its ability to grant or withhold the 'right to supply'. But exactly the same principle could, and should, apply to the level of interactions between states. To give an example of how this might work, consider China. One of the fundamental imbalances in the world economic order has been the deliberate manipulation

by China of its currency, to achieve an extra competitive edge for its industries – and hence to secure a large part of the world's manufacturing capability. But this strategy would have been impossible if large customer states had exercised the right to control the countries they were willing to be supplied by, and if they had made it a condition of China's 'right to supply' that the Chinese exchange rate was allowed to move closer to a more equilibrium level. Such an approach would have prevented the extreme build up of debt owed to China by some of the main Western economies. But it would also have had a profound effect on the industrial structure of these economies, since they themselves would have been able to maintain a much more balanced industrial base.

Implementing the strategy outlined in the previous paragraph would not be easy. It would require substantial amendment to the current WTO rules. It would also require substantial education, to persuade people that some offers of supply might be too good to be true in the long term. And, of course, it would greatly help if the national accounting systems in operation were able to detect much earlier than the current system of national accounts just when a country was running into unsustainable levels of debt.

In general, the state needs to re-think its position, and re-assert its powers, in each of the key areas of economic life. Since the Second World War, there has been an ongoing process, under GATT, WTO, and EU, whereby the individual state has ceded its power to manage and control market forces. What we are arguing is that this process needs to be reversed: and that individual states should re-assert their power against the market. This is not a plea for narrow protectionism. Instead, the ultimate benefit of all will be secured by individual states working together intelligently, rather than by states collectively, and blindly, surrendering their interests to the market. And the benefits of such an approach are not just economic. What would result would be a much more even distribution of wealth: a much more balanced economic structure within each country: and much less need for destabilising flows of labour. All of these things would be to the ultimate benefit of society. ■

**Jim and Margaret Cuthbert are independent economists**



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# Education – Hope or Despair?

It would be my contention that most people in Scotland are proud of and generally content with our system of comprehensive education. That is not to say that we all think it couldn't be better but rather it is policy issues around cuts, class sizes, school aims and so on that most are concerned with. Thus there are many issues relating to education that need to be examined in policy terms. This initial article concentrates on three interrelated ones – education for citizenship in a changing world, the impact of inequalities on education and the idea of the 'dented shield' as a way of managing cuts.

There is a terrible irony – trying to develop education for citizenship in a context of increasing cynicism about all of the institutions of state and, in many parts of England at least, the issue of rioting and mob activity. I wrote some years ago that education for citizenship could not compensate for governments which led down the aspirations of young people, against the hopes of some that education for citizenship would also act as lessons against terrorism. And, many, if not most, of the young rioters in England in August will have been through an education system which, for the last 10 years, has had education for citizenship as a key formal priority. It has been the contention of those of us who are supportive of education for citizenship programmes to have been critical of the way in which it has been developed in many schools – issues relating to formal voice but no agency; ideas developed around responsibilities without rights (never mind that politicians, the media and many teachers think exactly the opposite); decreasing rights and responsibilities as students move from primary to secondary – exactly the opposite of what is needed as they develop adolescence; headteachers stressing paternalism, rather than rights.

A main driver behind the introduction of education for citizenship was the perceived lack of interest and involvement of young people in public and political life and low election turnout figures for 18- to 24-year-olds. Added to this was the fear for the state of democracy and the decline in trust of politicians and institution of government. However, rising engagement with single-issue politics such as the Iraq

and Afghanistan wars, world poverty, environmental and animal welfare issues, would appear to suggest that young people in western democracies although alienated from formal politics and voting are active and interested in single-issue campaigning politics where they can see results from their actions. Research found that individualistic participation is common, challenging assertions that people are politically apathetic. Many schools have responded to this through the establishment of eco-schools committees, fair trade groups and a focus on development education programmes. However, media images in a global age also allow children to become exposed to many more controversial social, political and humanitarian issues than ever before, and evidence has illustrated that pupils are keen to discuss such issues and that a programme on citizenship education needs to respond to this.

Indeed, although a positive driver towards education for citizenship stems from attempts to promote democratic citizenship, human and participation rights at local, national and global level -- rights which are enshrined in international convention such as the United Nations Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act, we must be aware that many schools see charity activities per se as a way of developing global citizenship. And even within this, there can be a lack of any understanding as to how the money is used and rarely any discussion around the causes of poverty. Research suggests that for many, the key element that the school encouraged in terms of citizenship was on personal choice (fair trade, no littering) rather than any real discussion on poverty or wider ecological issues.

However much there are mixed motives behind education for citizenship, most teachers got involved in it to try to make things better. The problem is that the situation in the real world has got worse. How would any young person react to the scandals (or 'firestorm', to use David Cameron's word) engulfing British society? Over the period of the introduction of education for citizenship we have seen massive distrust develop in major institutions – the police (series of wrongful imprisonments and in 2011 evidence that they would give

information to journalists for cash); MPs expenses of 2010, exposing corruption and shady immoral dealings; the financial sector playing casino capitalism with our lives; and now, the exposure of criminal journalism and revelations that our top political leaders were in thrall to a media mogul involved in corrupt and illegal dealings – either directly or with a nod and a wink.

Research into pupil attitudes suggests that there is widespread cynicism. Work in the area in Scotland with some 800 social studies pupils in S4 suggests that almost 65 per cent agreed with the statement 'European politicians promise things just to get your vote'; only 50 per cent felt that 'The way people in Europe vote is important in deciding how things are run in Europe'; and 31 per cent agreed that 'Scottish MEPs are out to line their own pockets' – and this all before the scandal of Westminster expenses. This has important lessons for us in terms of education for citizenship; many of the pupils who were cynical and apathetic towards voting, MSPs and parliament, were the most active in terms of single issue pressure groups and campaigns for achievable, immediate things such as 'Fair Trade'. Research in England into 1,160 school students' attitudes towards formal politics and single issue involvement, found that young people are involved in local issues and campaigning, are keen to use new technology (particularly the internet to become more informed and involved – and of course, as issues around bullying and the organisation of 'riot' activities has shown, this can be seen as a double-edged sword), are not alienated from caring about political issues per se but (in line with other research) are not very interested in traditional party politics. It was also found that generally disinterested and cynical school students knew how to organise a single issue pressure group campaign and responded to the call for action with much more enthusiasm than they had previously shown; they had confidence in their ability to achieve their aim.

So, is this worrying? I don't think necessarily so. It is indeed a natural reaction, not just by young people but by most of us who have deserted membership of the established political parties in

## Henry Maitles looks at the big issues facing Scottish school education and that from citizenship to inequality, tackling neoliberalism is a big agenda

droves. The reason primarily for the appeal of single issue campaigns seems to be that there is a clear connection between the energies put in and the result; direct action fits many young people's aspirations and lifestyles far better than putting a cross on a ballot paper in a dusty town hall. Young people are attracted to these issues precisely because they can see a direct result of their actions, as opposed to activity in political parties. Although issues such as animal rights, the environment, third world poverty, homelessness and pollution move young people, they are turned off by 'spin' politics or committees of the Scottish Parliament or the election of the speaker of the House of Commons or membership of the Scottish Executive. Yet even very young children can tell you about Greenpeace or the Big Issue or global warming and indeed can explain what these types of organisation are about. Our politicians clearly find this problematic but they are at least in part the architect of the supposed problem. If our representatives are cynical towards the job and some of them see it as a gravy train, they should not be surprised when the criticism of young people is turned on them.

And yet, we must not become starry-eyed about the impact that education for citizenship (or indeed any education initiative) can have. The glaring inequalities in education, linked to inequalities in society, have a detrimental effect on the education chances of young people. There is a direct correlation between poverty and achievement in its narrow and broad senses, particularly starkly clear in the link between free school meal entitlement and school exam results. As far back as 1997, the Treasury (under the leadership of Gordon Brown as Chancellor) maintained that the strongest correlation on school exam results was the median income of the parents.

(Almost) everybody agrees that educational disadvantage is intrinsically linked to socio-economic disadvantage and educational reform should be viewed in terms of impact on this. Now this must not become an excuse for doing nothing; the kinds of things that schools try to do to help social inclusion, such as homework clubs, breakfast sessions, positive attendance rewards and more nutritious school meals are useful and beneficial but

cannot fundamentally alter the imbalance caused by social deprivation. Thatcher from 1979-1997, New Labour from 1997-2010 and the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government from 2010 have been so wedded to a neoliberal agenda that, as in health policy, no matter what it does in education terms it does not challenge the underlying poverty that is the cause of most of the problem. Effectively, despite numbers of educational initiatives, the education gap grows as the wealth gap grows.

Finally, there is the issue of 'cuts'. Whatever the policies of the new Government in Holyrood will be, the coalition in Westminster has told us that the cuts will be continuing with gusto. It is interesting how these ideas have now become mainstream. That 'there is no alternative' or 'the only show in town' has become a mantra for all the political parties and indeed for most of the general public, with us arguing amongst ourselves which areas should be protected and all sectors pleading a 'special case'. Do we want to continue with this, meaning less of that? – more teachers or no university fees?; compulsory redundancies or cuts in supply staff? It was encapsulated in the EIS ballot earlier this year – no compulsory redundancies but a wage freeze and other conditions, often affecting the most vulnerable and least able to protect themselves.

However, the election of a majority SNP government in May of this year puts those of us who think that there should be a more proactive campaign against the cuts in a new – potentially stronger – position. Primarily because it is possible to argue that the vote in part was a protest against the cuts (and indeed most commentators outside the mainstream defeated parties do so) – that is why, at least partly, all the main parties in Scotland were eclipsed by the SNP. What this can mean is that there is a case that there is no meaningful mandate in Scotland for the Westminster coalition austerity package, in a similar position to the Poll Tax of 20 years ago.

The local authorities and the Scottish Parliament could argue that as the cuts have no mandate here, there will be a series of no cuts budget deficits announced – effectively the local authorities and the Scottish Government would go into a

deficit, to be dealt with at a later date as the economy grows in the future. There is no doubt that this would be a challenging decision for any local authority and the Scottish Government to take, particularly as they are wedded to a managerialist approach to the cuts – that we need to implement them the best way that it can be done, protecting where we can. But it may be that this approach – known traditionally and particularly in labour and trade union circles as the 'dented shield' -- is not the best way to handle these cuts. For two reasons: firstly, the scale of the cuts means that the dismantling of aspects of a cherished service, such as education or health, might not easily be put back, even in the 'good times' in the future, assuming there are some; secondly, these cuts are not just pragmatic but are, I would argue, in a main part ideological. The Conservatives in particular are implementing a particular world view of the relationship between state and society and this might need a more political opposition than just complaining about individual cuts. For example, there seems to be little shortage of money for key privatised policies or education pet projects such as Free Schools. Indeed, proposals to alter taxation policy means that leaving money to charity is now going to be tax-deductible; so the rich will be able to leave money to, for example, their local private school – further widening the funding gap and thus inequalities and reducing income to the Treasury. It is a move from welfare to philanthropy.

In conclusion, we need to see school education as a whole – citizenship programmes which stress civic (as opposed to rights-based) responsibilities in the schools, education inequalities and cuts are linked in a downward spiral. There is a need for research in each of these areas – what is the relationship between rights and responsibilities in schools and wider?; how do we challenge and tackle issues around poverty and inequalities in education, where teachers and schools and individual students are seen as the problem?; and, how do we shape a strategy for challenging the cuts without us each arguing a special case? These are not easy issues but have to be tackled. ■

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# Reactions to Violence

In 2005, when the neoliberal circus of the G8 was held in Gleneagles, the Scottish left organised through the G8Alternatives (G8A) coalition and achieved a degree of (strained) unity between various left factions, Green and Socialist politicians, democratic socialists, trades unions and left-leaning environmental and anti-poverty NGOs. The coalition did not include the Anarchists who organised separately through Dissent!, or many of the more liberal NGOs who felt more comfortable in Make Poverty History. It also, with few exceptions, did not include a mobilisation of the primary victims of neoliberalism, the poorest section of the working class. The experience of resistance to the G8 left a series of lessons from which the left in Scotland needs to learn, concerning nonviolence, class and civil society.

A crucial event in the preparation for the G8 was G8A's response to the usual media's scaremongering that protests would inevitably lead to violence. Representatives from G8A arranged a press conference and pledged their commitment to nonviolence. As Friends of the Earth, for whom I worked at the time, was a member of G8A and a key participant in the press conference, I was enthused, and looked forward to the development of a strategy of nonviolent resistance to the neoliberal bandwagon which was about to ride into town. I was disappointed. Its public advocates merely reproduced the common misunderstanding that nonviolence simply means 'avoiding violence'.

For the first decade of the 21st century, the Scottish Centre for Nonviolence resourced activists through a wide range of educational, training and support functions. The founders of the Centre, Helen Steven, Peace worker for the Iona Community, and her partner Ellen Moxley were to be awarded the Gandhi International Peace Award for their lifetime's work challenging nuclear weapons and other forms of militarism through their strong commitment, sophisticated analysis and practical implementation of nonviolence. After it closed, resources for the Scottish Centre were passed to Scotland's for Peace, a coalition of civil society groups

committed to removing weapons of mass destruction from Scotland. The UK, which with France constitutes Europe's the nuclear weapons states, maintains its nuclear arsenal in Scotland at Faslane, where a peace camp has been active for nearly 30 years.

The Scottish Centre for Nonviolence contributed to the skills and intelligence used by many activists who have invaded, blockaded, disrupted and decorated the Faslane home of the UK's weapons of mass destruction, as well as other activists whose direct action has been focused on the perpetrators of militarism, colonialism and environmental destruction. As was demonstrated by G8A however, nonviolence remains misunderstood as meaning little more than the avoidance of violence during protests. The growth of 'Nonviolent Direct Action', important though this is to the politics of dissent, has somewhat distracted from the core lessons of the nonviolence of M.K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, which we would do well to refresh.

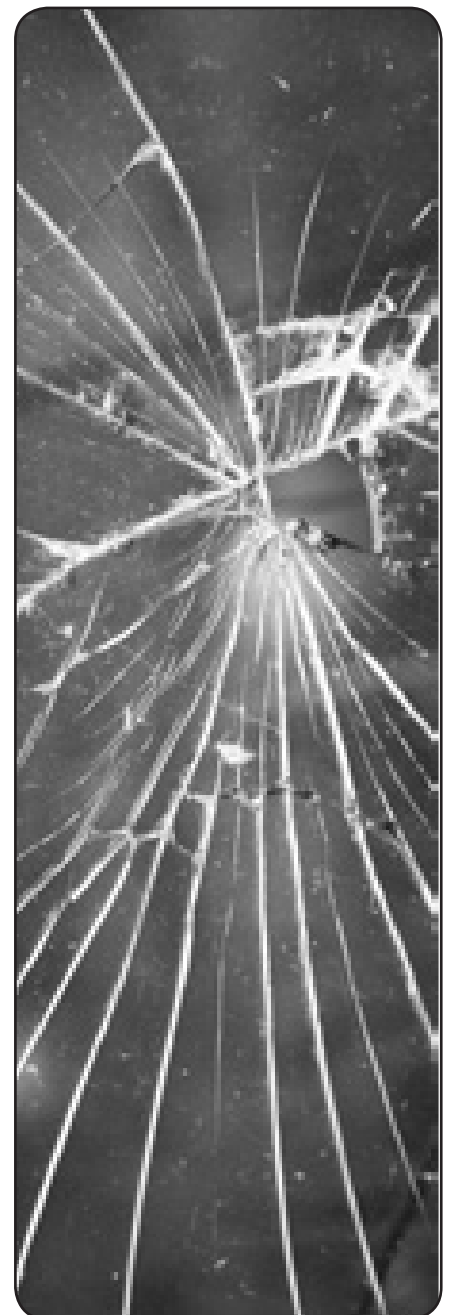
For Gandhi and King, nonviolence involved mobilising the oppressed and revealing the violence inherent in their oppression. As a result of the movements that they led, British colonialism and American segregation were exposed as the brutal shoring up of privilege which they are. The sham claims of benign or paternalistic motives in the interests of Indian 'untouchables' or African Americans collapsed.

Nonviolence is not just the avoidance of violence, it is the opposite of violence, it is anti-violence. In 1930 when Gandhi and his followers marched to collect salt in breach of the British colonial salt tax, they deliberately provoked a violent response as police beat the protesters and they refused to react. King's black students deliberately rode the Greyhound buses through areas controlled by the Ku Klux Klan and overtly racist police forces, knowing that they would provoke violence. Nonviolence does not avoid violence. Nonviolence removes the sticking plaster over oppression and touches the wound so that it hurts.

In Scotland, the task of a nonviolent movement is to identify oppressions

whose violence is hidden, and to provoke it to expose itself.

But Gandhi and King also used nonviolence as a mobilising tool for the oppressed. The advocates of nonviolence in Scotland are generally not those who are experiencing the worst of oppression. We are the middle class, educated professionals who populate the NGOs. Whilst there are honourable exceptions, the primary victims of oppression, those who experience poverty, are left out of the movement for nonviolent resistance. Work is needed to build and maintain alliances between the civil society and those at the sharp end of oppression.



## Eurig Scandrett looks at the history of non-violence, environmental justice and the left in post-devolution Scotland and concludes that there is an awful lot still to be achieved

For example, when Scottish devolution was confirmed, Friends of the Earth Scotland launched its campaign for environmental justice and a fledgling environmental

justice movement was mobilised. The campaign combined traditional policy lobbying with mobilisation amongst those experiencing the worst pollution – primarily those also experiencing social and economic injustice. This took

Friends of the Earth out of its comfort zone, for a while, as it responded to the needs of those living in poor housing on contaminated land beside polluting operations, often working for low wages in polluted workplace environments.

When he came to power, the Labour First Minister Jack McConnell was persuaded to adopt policy on environmental justice, with a view to challenging the pollution of the poor. Research sponsored by the Scottish Executive confirmed correlations between social deprivation and key sources of environmental damage: industrial pollution, extractive industry, contaminated land and water and air pollution (Fairburn, 2005). During that time, a major legislative opportunity emerged to deliver environmental justice on the ground, in the Executive-sponsored Planning Bill. When it was eventually passed in 2006, whilst it included some concessions to communities who would be affected by polluting developments, it essentially reflected the interests of business. Civil society and affected communities combined had failed to match the influence of business on a Labour-led coalition Executive.

Friends of the Earth Scotland's approach to environmental justice won support from radical environmentalists across the world, through its attempt to synthesise local environmental injustices with the global and intergenerational. Scotland's resource consumption remains between three and 10 times higher than a globally equitable distribution

would demand but our natural resource base could be used, with appropriate investment, to reduce this considerably.

However, since the election of the SNP minority government in 2007, Friends of the Earth drew back from leading an environmental justice movement and focused more on its membership's priorities of a more technical approach to climate change and green lifestyle initiatives. The

environmental justice movement became even more fragmented but continued through the activities of diverse groups including Scottish Hazards Campaign, Scottish Coal Action Group, Green Alternatives to Incineration in Scotland (GAINS), Planning Democracy, Scottish Friends of Bhopal and the cross-border network So We Stand.

The experience of Friends of the Earth resonates with many left-leaning civil society organisations, seeking to advocate on behalf of the working class victims of poverty, with a supporter base in the professional middle class. Civil society needs to be an important component of movements for social justice in Scotland, yet as with the state, civil society is highly contested terrain. Scottish civil society maintained a strong if conservative identity during the union of the parliaments through its soft nationalism of Kirk, law, education and media. More progressive elements of civil society were behind the push for, and ultimate shape of, devolved political structures through the Scottish Constitutional Convention, Consultative Steering Group and Civic Forum. However, civil society's radical wing remains fragmented, often transitory and disconnected from the people with most at stake in a transformed Scottish future. A degree of incorporation of civil society into the corridors of power can lead to partial but significant successes, as has been demonstrated by the women's movement's achievements in government policy on violence against. However, the

lure of power risks abandoning radical transformation, as evidenced by the environmental technocrats' approach to waste and climate change.

In 2003, whilst the optimism of devolution was still very young, I wrote "Scotland is in a unique position. The relationship between its ecological and economic base, its democratic politics and its civil society is shifting. This provides an opportunity for exploring and intervening in social change with long term implications." Arguably, that opportunity is still here although the optimism has been lost amongst the ongoing commitment to failing neoliberal policies and the economic, political and cultural attacks on its victims and the public sector services on which they depend.

The task of building movements for social justice is educational, in the Gramscian sense that any relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship. This kind of education does not depend on Scotland's educational institutions, which are currently not up to the job, although the opportunities in these institutions need to be built on. Scotland's unique institution of community education, formed after the Alexander report of 1975 as a service to support collective organisation of critical citizens, is threadbare but still retains the capacity to challenge power. Our beleaguered universities, which are maintaining some resistance to the privatisation inflicted in England, must use that space to respond to social movements for transformation. But beyond these institutions, the task of the left is a process of learning from and within social movements in civil society. A left hegemony to challenge the existing neoliberal version requires an alliance between classes, a relationship of learning between the progressive movements in civil society and the organised and unorganised victims of oppression. And this political praxis requires an analysis of the causes of oppression in order to expose its violence and undermine it. ■

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# Democracy. At Work.

In his heyday, Jimmy Reid was among the very best of the passionate, articulate and effective advocates of the value of meaningful, civilising and satisfying work that Scotland has ever produced. His 1971 University of Glasgow rectorial address – which railed against alienation under the profit regime of capitalism – is a well known example of this. Elsewhere, he was a consistent advocate of workers' right. But more than that, he highlighted in a once-in-a-lifetime achievement that workers – when mobilised collectively in a highly conscious, oppositional and assertive way – have the potential to dramatically change the social relations around them and which they are normally the mere subjects of.

I am, of course, referring to the Upper Clyde Shipbuilder's (UCS) work-in of 1971-1972 of which he was the pre-eminent leader. This action transformed mere – if powerful – words into history-changing deeds, and in a spectacular fashion. In constructing this mass action, he and his colleagues become active objects in history.

Thus, Jimmy Reid understood that workers' rights could best and most fully be pursued as collective rights of labour which then hold out the opportunity of transforming the economic and social relations of capitalism for progressive ends and for the majority of society. The theme which ran like 'Brighton' or 'Blackpool' through the proverbial stick of rock in the UCS action was that capitalism is a rapacious system based on servicing the greed of the minority to the detriment of the need of the majority.

Consequently, capitalism either needed thorough going reform or abolition if the righteous needs of the majority were to be satisfied. The UCS work-in more than any event in post-war Scotland was an exemplar of showing how the operation of the capitalist market can be socialised and in doing so 'democracy' can be extended from outwith the Palace of Westminster.

Workers, individually and collectively, experience – and are subject to – a fundamental lack of democracy in the places in which they work (and where they spend a considerable period of their lives). While there are some limited

forms of political democracy through indirect representative institutions such as parliament, there are no corresponding bodies for providing for industrial or workplace democracy.

Moreover, those representative political institutions do not exercise much influence over the workplace – they choose not to because of the voluntaristic tradition of industrial relations and because of the way that parliament was fashioned to leave the economy essentially under private control and in private ownership. Consequently there is no tangible workplace democracy.

Moreover, because there is a lack of democracy at work, where goods and services are produced, distributed and exchanged and decisions are made over these matters, there is also an absence of economic democracy. Consequently, there is a sizable democratic deficit.

Of course, workers have traditionally sought interest representation directly at work through collective bodies – unions – but they are heavily dependent upon others parties, namely employers and the state, for acceptance, legitimacy and recognition, so workers have no automatic, inalienable or inviolable rights for exercising some form of control over their working lives at work. Furthermore, union power ebbs and flows because of movements in labour and product markets as well as union strategies.

What has brought this issue of the abject lack of workplace (and economic) democracy back into sharp relief has not just been that workers are being made to pay for a crisis not of their own making but that the state has handed over public money to bail out capital without capital forfeiting any control and the crisis being used to extend the reach of capital and the market. If many of the banks had really been 'nationalised' as we were often told, back in the day this would at least

have meant civil servants would have run them (allegedly) on our behalf. Of course, 'nationalisation' in this instance did not mean that at all. But it does at least highlight that capital can be regulated and regulated in a progressive way.

But to stop the alienation that Jimmy Reid talked of so eloquently in his rectorial address requires not just that we have genuine nationalisation of the post-war settlement period but

rather that instead of civil servants running the leading companies within each industry, workers themselves – through their democratically elected representatives – run them on their own behalf and on behalf of citizens in general. So instead of the statist means

of 'nationalisation', we would be talking about social and public ownership of what are often referred to as the commanding heights of the economy.

From where we are now, this utopia would be a bold step indeed. Some may see it as revolutionary or at least very radical. Yet in all likelihood, it is a goal that is a bit too far ahead of the curve for most citizens. They may think it a good idea but say it's not likely to happen. Indeed, such an idea may be attractive but lack credibility because the very social forces needed to impose the idea upon resistant capitalists and a neoliberal political class are abjectly lacking. Consequently, the bridge of the means of worker directors can be used to move from where we are now to this fuller goal of social and public ownership where the process and outcomes of the market are regulated. Alongside the idea of worker directors, three further and complementing ideas or proposals are put forward as a means to rebalance economy and society in order to deliver a large measure social justice and equality.

## WORKER DIRECTORS

Worker directors existed in the Post Office and British Steel in the 1960s and 1970s in a very mild form. The Royal

**Workers, individually and collectively, experience – and are subject to – a fundamental lack of democracy in the places in which they work**

## Gregor Gall explains why a creative case for the right of workers to have a say in their workplace is as relevant now as in the days of the UCS work-in

Commission on Industrial Democracy (the Bullock Report) established in the fag-end of the 1974-1979 Labour government did not do much to advance the idea or the practice. But none of this should detract from their purchase and potential. Worker directors have been a central feature of the system of industrial relation in post-war Germany called co-determination. Here, worker representatives sit on the supervisory boards of large companies. The likes of Will Hutton advocate such an idea because it can help control, stabilise and civilise capital and capitalism, and indeed make it more efficient. The advocacy here is not for those reasons but rather for the themes that Jimmy Reid spoke of - to end the alienation as a result of the lack of control over work and the meaningless of work.

If worker directors existed, the potential would be to institutionalise a form of worker control that could help delay, reduce or halt many of the decisions that employers routinely make in a unilateral manner, whether this be over redundancies, pay cuts, outsourcing or offshoring. More than that, worker directors could be a form of creeping or encroaching control upon capital because the implementation of the idea could help stimulate further demands from workers and recreate the confidence and capability to challenge capital. As such, worker directors would do far more to create and extend genuine workers' control than all the directives from the social dimension of the European Union and the human resource management inspired employee involvement initiatives of employers put together. Under these, consultation and not negotiations rights are given. Consultation essentially amounts to be told what is going to happen before it happens.

One of the ways to broaden the appeal and purchase of worker directors is to insist that consumers – one of the so-called stakeholders - of the goods and services should also have some representation on the board of directors too. The RMT union provided such a model of social ownership in 2005 when, in proposing a model of a future structure of ownership and control for the railways in Scotland, it signalled that

a third of the board of what is Scotrail should be comprised of rail unions, a third the travelling public and a third local authorities.

### ALLIANCES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS AND USERS

One of the hallmarks of the UCS campaign was the community campaign which mobilised tens of thousands in demonstrations and other solidarity actions. Clearly, the UCS campaign did not then just merely start and end at the shipyard gates. This same principle needs to be applied in an innovative way to the current challenge of opposing the age of austerity courtesy of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government.

Alliances of public service providers and users, when effectively mobilised, would make the point that the defence of jobs and conditions of the service providers is intimately bound up with the provision of the right amounts of good quality services. For service providers to oppose the cuts and privatisation on their own risks allowing the political right to characterise such action as merely being the protection of vested, sectional interests. The idea of alliances can not only sidestep this but also create powerful counter-coalition to the implementation of the policies of the coalition government. This would mean unions taking the lead in doing so.

### SECTOR FORUMS

The Unite union in Scotland launched an important policy document at the 2011 STUC congress called 'Making Devolution Work'. The key proposal in the document was to establish statutory sector forums which would allow workers through their unions to bargain with their employers. By establishing sector minima above the minimum wage, wages and conditions would not only be raised but they would be standardised so taking them out as a factor of competition between employers. In doing so, the downward pressure of employers seeking competitive advantage would be removed and attention focussed upon instead productivity, investment and quality of goods or services. Unite suggested that the sector forums could best be piloted in tourism, road haulage, the renewables industry and the voluntary sector. Such sector forums *de*

*facto* exist in many continental European countries without detriment to economic efficiency. Indeed, the reverse is true – they aid it.

### STANDING COMMISSION ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

The reach of unions is lower than it has been for many years. Even when unions were stronger, many sectors were still difficult to organise. However, unions along with other pressure groups, NGOs and researchers like academics could play a vital role as public advocates and investigators for those workers who are unable to gain the benefit of collective union representation because of the sectors in which they find themselves working. Unfortunately, government bodies and the Citizens' Advice Bureaux no longer play this kind of role. Breaches of health and safety, denial of rights at work, flouting of the minimum wage and the like could all be highlighted and publicised by a Standing Commission on Workers' Rights with a view to lobbying the offending employers to mend their ways and to put pressure on the relevant government agencies to take appropriate action. Where existing government powers are inadequate to deal with this, the Commission could advocate for the introduction of new ones.

Jimmy Reid had bold political imagination, this being best illustrated by the UCS action being a work-in rather than just an occupation. The tactic of the work-in was critical to the success of the UCS struggle. The Foundation in his name needs to adopt a similar innovative perspective if it is to be successful in making relevant the vision that Jimmy had for Scotland and to do so in the twenty-first century. The proposals set out here in regard work, employment and the economy are offered as suggestions of some concrete means to do so. Whether they exactly hit the spot or not is less important than generating the discussion and debate about the kind of ideas and proposals that are needed to effect radical social change in this arena. From consensus upon ideas can then come consensus upon action. ■

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# Beyond Alienation

The argument for shorter working hours is as old as the labour movement itself. Jimmy Reid's Glasgow University Rectorial speech on "Alienation", first delivered in 1971, restated the credo. It's worth quoting at length:

"If automation and technology is accompanied as it must be with full employment, then the leisure time available to man will be enormously increased. If that is so, then our whole concept of education must change. The whole object must be to equip and educate people for life, not solely for work or a profession. The creative use of leisure, in communion with, and in service to our fellow human beings can and must become an important element in self-fulfilment."

The crucial point is "full employment". One of the ways enterprises seek ever greater returns on capital is by deployment of ever-more-efficient technologies and working practices - usually implying the shedding of labour. So Jimmy presumed a management of capitalism (no doubt with labour unions in their full pomp) where a smaller number of organisations transform productive efficiencies into free-time for workers - rather than a mad scramble of many enterprises, seizing new tools and deploying workers variably, to sell stuff and services to dissatisfied consumers.

Does the second scenario sound familiar? And let's not even factor in how much, since the early 1970s, media and marketing has played its role in the psychic scrambling of the kind of collective purpose represented by the UCS work-in.

Yet even as the old Marxist axioms presently haunt Western establishments - with orthodox financial experts like Nouriel Roubini saying "Marx was right" in predicting that capitalism can choke itself to death, in its current shift of income from labour to capital - there is a problem in returning to classic socialist analysis. It's implied by Jimmy's quote above - his noble presumption that "the creative use of leisure", informed and structured by what we'd call in the Scottish tradition a "democratic

intellectualism", is where a fully empowered working-class would head.

In the modern Scotland of ubiquitous retail, car sovereignty and the celebriarian obsessions of the tabloids, one might at least suggest that Jimmy's road to the art of living well has not been too enthusiastically taken - perhaps as the toxic consequence of exactly that "alienation" from a sense of agency and self-determination that his great essay outlined. So how do Scots leap out of that trap? What can damp down the fires of work-to-hyper-consume that has been the sociological motor, at least, of our current financial crisis? What could pull Scots towards valuing "leisure time", in Jimmy's words, rather than mall-time, as a consequence of a progressing society?

I think we have a latent 'big narrative' in Scotland for the kind of shift towards shorter working hours that Jimmy Reid saw as the consequence of a truly socialised country. But we have to piece it together, from old and new elements.

One new element since the 1970s would have to be the planetary limits revealed by anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change. We are assailed every week by new images of our climate becoming ever-more unpredictable and destructive - some far off (Australian fires and Japanese tsunamis), some close to home (the next village flooding scare).

I'm writing a book on innovation and sustainability at the moment called *Radical Animal: innovation, sustainability and human nature*. Many of the climate gurus I'm reading say that our weather instability will only increase if we don't find a way to massively reduce the amount of planet-warming carbon spewed into our atmosphere, from our use of fossil fuels for energy and production. That means, to some extent, addressing our consumerist, stuff-spewing society - which then addresses our need for the kind of jobs that will give us sufficient disposable income to participate in the melee.

Tim Jackson, the recently deposed head of the disbanded Commission on Sustainable Development, has some brilliant ideas in his book *Prosperity Without Growth* - and one of them is to look at a wholesale and managed

reduction in working hours.

For him, this is a quality-of-life 'win-win'. Reduced economic activity overall reduces our carbon footprint (this has been measured in recessions). But more free-time in all of our lives gives us the zone to do some essential repair work on, and also spark some invention with, the important relationships in our lives. It's these relationship - with partners, family, community, peers, hobbyists, creative collaborators - that the 'happiness' science of figures like Richard Layard tell us, is what brings us lasting happiness (beyond a certain level of income).

Jackson asks us to think about the etymology of 'prosperity' - rooted in the idea of 'hopefulness' - and substitute a narrative of hopefulness for a narrative of material wealth. 'Flourishing' is the other term that thinkers in the field of well-being regularly use, coming from the work of Amartya Sen and Martin Seligman: individuals and communities energetically growing and developing along a number of indicators, not just monetary or economic.

Much of the wellbeing research asks us to shift our basic understanding of human nature from homo/femina economicus (selfish maximisers of utility) to homo/femina socius (communally-interested empaths), based on much new social and mind science (Yochai Benkler's *The Penguin and the Leviathan* is the coming and definitive work on this).

If we accept this science, then we can presume a few things about what Scots would do with their extra hours - which is that they will reach for pro-community and pro-flourishing activities, rather than, say, more Sky Sports 1. In themselves, this will reduce indice of "ill-being" (our parlous and interconnected health stats), and consequently reduce pressure on the welfare state to expensively bind together the walking wounded (which will be necessary if revenues from a steady-state economy stop growing).

The green movement's UK think-tank the New Economics Foundation has a whole vision - encapsulated in their Great Transition research theme - for a 'bigger society' where we have the time and support to co-produce, and

## Pat Kane argues for the need for a new political economy of wellbeing and sustainability in Scotland both to create a more sustainable society and a more fulfilled population

participate in, the services that constitute a healthy, meaningful life.

One clear agenda for the Reid Foundation is to 'put a kilt' on some of this research and these paradigms. But just as importantly, we have to connect the best in sustainable-lifestyle thinking to native enterprises and traditions. For one thing, as the endeavours of people like Mike Small around food production and consumption (the Fife Diet), or Andy Wightman and Lesley Riddoch in land reform and community empowerment show, we already have a vitality of practice around sustainable living.

The grander prize - with an independence referendum promising (to a greater or lesser extent) a step-change in the powers of governance - is to align national ambitions for a shift towards 'green production', with a progressive 'green lifestyle' also. It seems incoherent to argue for the 're-industrialisation of Scotland' on the basis of renewable

energy and other green systems, if the consequence of that level of employment is spending patterns that fuels the same-old go-go consumerist retail culture.

Tim Jackson argues that we need to shift patterns of investment at a macro-economic level - an arrangement which could support a properly sustainable society, pushing flows of investment capital in a much more long-term and pro-social direction (with a regulation of the labour market to reduce working hours being one of those tools).

One more research topic for the Reid Foundation would certainly be, again, to 'Tartanise' this debate about the proper macro-economic framework for a sustainable independent Scottish state. For example, is a beggar-thy-neighbour approach to corporation tax, as promoted by Salmond and many business supporters, really the appropriate instrument for sustainability? What exactly should be done with a 'military dividend' from leaving the Union, for

example, in terms of infrastructure development?

The Left-Greens in Scotland need to step up to the moment of the independence referendum, and begin to do serious work on a new political economy of sustainability and wellbeing. There is a plethora of available intellectual tools and research precedents lying around. If we have institutional support to do this - beyond the fitful and donatory labours of the blogosphere, and not waiting for the sluggish response of Scottish academia - we should proceed immediately. ■

*Pat Kane, musician and writer, runs three networks: The Play Ethic ([www.theplayethic.com](http://www.theplayethic.com)), Thoughtland ([www.thoughtland.info](http://www.thoughtland.info)) and Radical Animal ([www.radicalanimal.net](http://www.radicalanimal.net)). He is still one half of Scottish pop-soul group Hue And Cry ([www.hueandcry.co.uk](http://www.hueandcry.co.uk))*



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# Facing Up to Failure Demand

In November 2010 I was privileged to accept an invitation by Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond MSP, to chair a Commission to develop recommendations for reforming the delivery of public services in Scotland. The First Minister was keen that this work be completed relatively quickly, and in June 2011 we presented our Report – a timetable that could not have been met without the considerable commitment of each of the nine Commissioners and the advisers and the secretariat that supported the Commission.

Our task was to develop principles that should inform the reform of Scotland's public services to ensure these are financially sustainable in

the medium- to long-term and able to meet the changing needs of public service users. As the remit made clear, our work would be guided by a particular 'vision' of the role that public services play in Scotland's society. At the heart of that vision are public services that support a fair and equal society, are designed and delivered around the needs of the individuals and communities that used them, and which protect the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our society. In my view, and in the view of my Commission, achieving these objectives – which together equate to an adherence to the principle of social justice – will require a radical and far-reaching overhaul in the design and deliver of public services.

Scotland's public services face considerable challenges in the period ahead. In the immediate future public services are confronted with swingeing cuts to public spending the newly elected Tory-LibDem coalition Government announced in 2010. The direct impact on Scotland will be a real terms decline of 11.3 per cent in the block grant between 2010-11 and 2014-15. Estimates suggest it will be 2025-26 before the Scottish budget returns to its 2009-10 levels in

real terms. At the same time many in Scotland will suffer further because of changes to social benefits arising from the welfare "reforms" being implemented by the Westminster government. Public spending cuts of the scale and duration we are seeing today are unprecedented. And while acknowledging our public finances have to be re-balanced in the wake of the financial crisis of 2007, I reject entirely the argument that public

spending should bear the brunt of this adjustment with the result that it will be the weakest and most vulnerable in our society that will suffer most.

But public spending cuts are not the only challenge facing our public services. It is clear the level of demand for public services is set to increase

dramatically such that, under present modes of service delivery, even without current spending cuts both local and central government budgets would buckle under the strain. There are two principal drivers of this increasing demand for public services. The first is the ever-rising costs of 'failure demand' – that is demand for public services that would not arise had public services been designed around preventative actions that tackle underlying causes of social disadvantage instead of being focused principally on the symptoms of disadvantage. Estimates suggest that as much as 40 per cent of current spending on public services is accounted for by failure demand. As a Commission we recognised that it is imperative that, as a society, we prioritise public services that are designed to prevent failure demand from arising – for instance in the criminal justice system, employability measures and in health and social care. Moreover I believe that targeting public services on prevention will contribute massively to furthering the wider objective of strengthening social cohesion across the country.

The second driver of rising public services demand is our ageing

population. The proportion of those aged 65 and over in the total population is set to rise dramatically in the next decade, bringing with it significant new demands on our public services – demands which everyone providing evidence to the Commission recognised cannot be met under the current approach to public service delivery. That people are living longer is a matter to be celebrated. But if we are collectively to ensure that our larger elderly population enjoy an appropriate quality of life, public services will need to focus much more on preventative actions and early interventions designed to reduce the numbers who find themselves in situations of the acutest need or vulnerability. This in turn means that public services must be designed and delivered in close partnership with the individuals and communities reliant upon them.

Our Report sets out many detailed recommendations for reforming the design and delivery of public services that must be implemented if we are to meet these challenges. These recommendations are very firmly based on the evidence we collected. As a Commission we held around 100 meetings with key stakeholders, including a number with members of the public, and with front-line staff. And we received over 200 written responses. We were impressed, and instructed, by the range of forward-looking initiatives being introduced in public service organisations aimed at improving the quality of service delivery and ensuring better outcomes for users. Our recommendations build substantially on new approaches to public service delivery that are being implemented across Scotland. It is vital we learn from these initiatives and wherever possible ensure 'best practice' actions are rolled out across the relevant public service sectors. Our recommendations are based around four overarching principles that we believe should guide the reform of public service delivery.

First, reforms must aim to empower the individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use. We must get away from an overly 'top-down' approach to public services which treat users as passive

**Public services must prioritise expenditure on actions that prevent negative outcomes from arising – we have to get real and tackle 'failure demand'**

## Campbell Christie explains why the report of his Commission on public service delivery rejected the 'slash and burn' approach of London in favour of a more thoughtful and collective approach

recipients rather than a resource which can be utilised to improve the design and effectiveness of the service being provided. Public services should be based upon close collaboration between service providers and service users – drawing on the resources of both – which, because they reflect 'local' needs and capacities, are more cost effective than conventional models and will achieve better outcomes over the longer term.

Second, public service providers must be required to work in partnership to integrate the provision of different public services. It is difficult to overstate the importance of integrated service provision, or to understate the extent to which this currently happens. Many of our key public services display a 'silo' structure both in terms of adhering closely to their specific mandate and with respect to patterns of spending and budget responsibility. Where individuals and organisations are willing to work together, and coordinate and integrate their actions, outcomes for public service users improve dramatically.

Third, public services must prioritise expenditure on actions that prevent negative outcomes from arising – we have to get real and tackle 'failure demand'. All the evidence we heard affirmed the proposition that prioritising spending on preventative actions – be this in the criminal justice system, improved public health or employability – would deliver substantial cost savings on public services in later years.

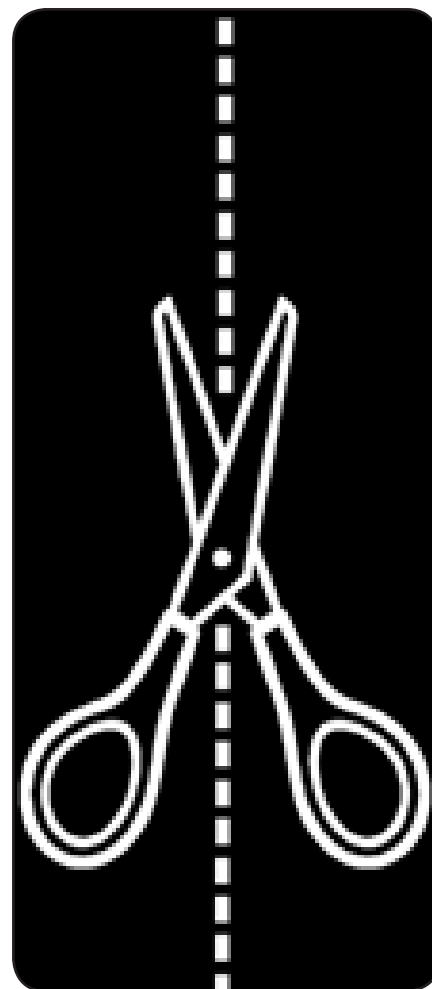
Fourth, our public services should continually strive to improve efficiency and effect cost savings by reducing duplication and sharing services wherever possible. And it is relatively straightforward to provide examples of where services can be shared – indeed many local authorities are undertaking such reviews at the present time. But this has to become an ever-present part of the landscape of public service delivery, and not be regarded as an option that only arises during periods of financial stress.

I do not underestimate the task ahead. Reforming public services raises many complex issues, including the implications for the public sector in Scotland. As a Commission we were not asked to, nor did we, consider the 'appropriate' future division of

responsibilities between the public, private and third sectors in the future delivery of public services. However if our recommendations are implemented there is little doubt that the structures, functions and roles of those currently delivering public services will change. It could not be otherwise. But it is essential that all such changes are driven by the sole objective of providing better and financially sustainable public services in Scotland. Reorganisation that is not founded in improved public service delivery is wasteful both of effort and money. My personal view is that while the public sector will be required to adapt to a reformed public service landscape, I fully expect that it should – and that it shall – remain central to the delivery and governance of public services in Scotland.

In presenting our Report it was perhaps inevitable that comparisons were drawn with the 'big society' initiative launched by the Prime Minister David Cameron and widely seen by many on the left, myself included, as threatening the basic principles on which the welfare state is founded. One of the most encouraging aspects of chairing the Commission was the degree of consensus across Scotland supportive of an approach to public services fundamentally at odds with that being championed by the current UK government. There is significant public and political support in Scotland for retaining a public service ethos which is inclusive and which aspires to reduce the economic and social inequalities that continue to blight our society and which account for a significant element of the increasing demand on our public services.

Two questions remain unanswered. The first is whether the current devolution settlement provides the Scottish government with a sufficient array of powers to ensure it is able to fulfil these aspirations? To the extent that key policies in the areas of employment and social welfare remain under the control of a UK government which demonstrably does not share the vision for public services that we in Scotland have, clearly this is problematic. That is why my Commission called for the devolution of competence for job search and support from Westminster to



Holyrood. However we were conscious that of a growing support for the devolution of much broader elements of social welfare policy to ensure that the different social objectives evident in Scotland could be achieved. So I believe we must consider the appropriate powers for the Scottish Parliament against this broader societal background rather than continue to conduct the debate in purely 'constitutional' terms. The second question is the commitment on the part of our politicians to take forward the reform agenda my Commission set out. The Commission provided a clear road-map for the way forward for public services. It now falls to our politicians and leaders – in local as well as national government – to drive this reform forward. If they fail the costs to future generations of Scottish society will be considerable. ■

*Campbell Christie was Chair of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services. With thanks to Drew Scott for his help with drafting.*

# Does The Sun Shine in Scotland?

Why on earth would Rupert Murdoch and his henchmen and women be interested in Scotland? So runs one line of argument, which downplays News International's political interests in Scotland. But evidence that they are interested in Scotland is to be found in the record of their activities. Holyrood is not Westminster, and does not have the power to regulate the broadcast media. Nevertheless, News International is active in Scotland as can be seen from the record of meetings with successive First Ministers, not to mention the leading role of the Murdoch empire in the destruction of the Scottish Socialist Party - a matter of no little import.

Technical gremlins got to *Newsnight Scotland* the evening they unearthed the

footage of Murdoch chaperoned by Alex Salmond around the News International printing plant at Eurocentral just outside Glasgow. The footage has still not been seen on the BBC but it shows that the SNP is not immune to the largesse of News Corp. At the beginning of August copies of correspondence with News International were released under the Freedom of Information Act. These revealed Salmond "had written several times to Rupert Murdoch in recent years to invite the News Corp chief executive to events in both the US and Scotland". The press highlighted Salmond's reverential language in phrases such as "as ever I found your views insightful and stimulating".

The record of the meetings told a story of courtship culminating in the Scottish Sun backing the SNP in the 2010 election. As the *Record* reported:

"In January, Salmond met James Murdoch in London. Shortly after, Scottish editions of the Murdoch newspapers began running pro-SNP stories. The party provided an interview with SNP supporter Sir Sean Connery and increased their advertising spend

in the Murdoch titles. The *Sun* then delivered a ringing endorsement of Salmond on election day, in sharp contrast to the image of an SNP noose around Scotland in the 2007 campaign."

Naturally the Labour Party was quick to denounce the SNP and its closeness to big business and to the villain of the hour. Paul Martin Labour's business manager in Scotland claimed that Salmond:

"would clearly rather we all ignored the fact that he personally met with James Murdoch, wined and dined the editor of the Scottish News of the World and provided free articles and advertising to News International newspapers worth thousands of pounds."

Given the obsequious nature of Tony Blair's relations with Murdoch and indeed the continued chummy relations between the Labour front bench and the legions of Murdoch, Salmond didn't have too much trouble batting the accusation away: A spokesperson said:

"Labour's hypocrisy is breathtaking, given that practically their entire leadership attended Rupert Murdoch's summer party in London last month, downing champagne and oysters with Rebekah Brooks. The meeting with James Murdoch was in early January and was to discuss jobs and business opportunities in Scotland - they are after all one of Scotland's biggest private sector employers."

The SNP also highlighted previously released data on the meetings between Jack McConnell and News International. Still this is more a case of pots and kettles rather than an effective rebuttal.

What this shows though is that the Murdoch press is keen to be close to all political parties that who might be able to gain them advantages or potentially harm their interests. As has been widely remarked News Corp is happy to splash largesse and political support on any

party if it is in their interests. And that is the key word: interests. It does not matter if the Party in question is a bitter critic, there can be circumstances where collaboration is seen as a lesser evil if it helps to bury its enemies. Thus although the SSP leadership is on the record consistently as opposing News International, it is clear that Bob Bird and others in News International felt that destroying Tommy Sheridan was more important than collaborating with an anti-capitalist party like the SSP. We need not accept all of Tommy's defence case or even have any time for what the SSP and others have called the 'cult' of Tommy Sheridan to note the tactical decision by News International to use ('work with' might be to neutral a phrase here) - his enemies in the SSP.

The investigation announced into phone hacking in Scotland is also to investigate whether perjury was committed by witnesses at the Tommy Sheridan trial, most obviously by Andy Coulson, Bob Bird and other News International personnel. Let's remember that as well as phone hacking, Sheridan also found a bug planted in his car - which suggests that phone-hacking and perjury may not be the only way that offences have been committed. The phone hacking investigation is also looking into other criminal behaviour by News International "in respect of persons resident in Scotland". This obviously includes those involved in the Sheridan trial and perhaps also interference with Gordon Brown's communications and maybe others.

While we might not have the evidence to divine intentions, we can certainly establish the outlines of practice. Unsurprisingly the Murdoch empire acts consistently and ruthlessly in its own interests. Some suggest that this amounts to no more than that it likes to back winners. This can be read in at least a couple of ways. The first is that News Corp is a fragile entity dependent on the goodwill of the political elite and desperate to curry favour. It is certainly true that News Corp expends significant efforts in currying favour, through the traditional methods of politically acceptable forms of bribery (otherwise known as offering jobs, money and

# There has been much discussion of the influence of Rupert Murdoch and News Corporation on UK politics. David Miller explores whether Scotland is immune or whether we are just another target

gifts to decision-makers) and by lobbying. Given neither the Scottish nor Westminster Parliaments currently have lobbying disclosure legislation we have to look across the Atlantic for the evidence of expenditure. Open Secrets reports that News Corp spends on average more than \$5 million lobbying federal government in the US every year. In 2010 they hired 32 lobbyists, a former lawmaker and lobbied on 19 separate bills ([www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)). News Corp also donates hundreds of thousands of Dollars each year to Federal candidates for office, with in the last decade more than half going to the Democrats – an indication that interests and not ideology is at stake.

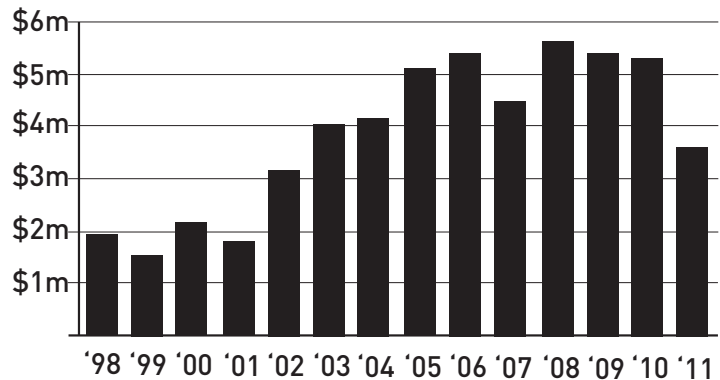
Unlike other corporations, however, they also have another weapon, which is the power of their media outlets to promote their friends and demote and destroy those who get in their way. Anne Diamond has testified to this in her own case, and there can be little doubt that News International was a significant force in the destruction of the Scottish

Socialist Party, whatever role we might assign to bit players in the drama.

The relationship with the SNP apparently causes shudders in some of the wiser hands in the party. Others, however, expressing the heterogeneity and marked lack of a coherent ideology in the SNP, seem to be able to perform all sorts of intellectual somersaults in rationalising the support of News International or indeed other conservative media corporations like the *Daily Express*.

The demise of the *New of the World*

Annual Lobbying by News Corp



Source: Open Secrets

and the withdrawal of the BskyB bid are indications that the Murdoch star is at least for the moment waning in London. It remains to be seen whether a similar process will develop in Scotland. ■

*David Miller is Professor of Sociology at Strathclyde University and Editor of [powerbase.info](http://powerbase.info)*



# We Were On Our Own Two Feet

The Upper Clyde Shipbuilders came into existence in 1968 following a review of the shipbuilding industry by the Labour Government, The Geddes Report, published 1966 which recommended rationalisation and horizontal integration of shipbuilding in the United Kingdom into large regional groups. The Minister who implemented this restructuring was Tony Benn.

One year after it was formed a letter was drafted by leading Tory MP Nicholas Ridley on 3 December 1969 in which he described the UCS as a cancer. He was one of the Selsdon Group, right-wing free marketeers who opposed state aid in companies like shipbuilding and believed they should be left to the vagaries of market forces.

Later in December 1969 they prepared the infamous Riddley Report, a vicious document outlining proposals

when they came into office to drastically curtail shipbuilding on the Upper Reaches. This proposed to hive off Yarrows, butcher, run down, sell for a pittance, refuse working capital which would lead to insolvency and the end of UCS. This would be done regardless of the viability of the company.

All objective analysis of UCS showed that the company was moving into profitability, they had a full order book to last them till 1974, with orders in the pipeline.

The Tories were elected to Government in 1971. A loan for £6 million to UCS was refused and the liquidator was called in. The leading shop stewards and the work force had been anticipating this. Jimmy Reid gave his now-famous speech announcing the work-in and the coordinating committee moved into action on all fronts, publicity,

information, calls to the labour movement the British public.

The shipyards, with all the labour force, stayed united behind the leadership despite the many attempts to throw them off course by those with vested interests who only saw the yards and their workers as units to be used as they wished, with no concern to the social or economic effects. The attempts of the government to divide the workforce when they proposed a compromise deal with the aid Danny McGarvie,

right-wing General Secretary of the Boilermakers Union and the press who warned that the solution of saving three yards and closing the famous John Browns shipyard was a reasonable compromise. The half a loaf is better than none philosophy.

A mass meeting of the workers rejected this. Jimmy Airlie opened the meeting and told the workers that the deal being offered by the government was not a new one but was contained in the Ridley Report as one of their scenarios. This was followed by Jimmy Reid who again rebutted the deal and asked why the press who had supported us were now saying we were being unreasonable.

He went on to say to the meeting, (taken from a taped transcript) "we'll discuss any proposals that deals with the four yards and the labour force. But all the time they come back to the butchery of our industry. I'd rather be on the dole than be amongst the 2500 that would be left to grovel, accept wage reductions and all sorts of other things, I'm telling you it would be a short term solution because their objectives would take place in a year or so and it would be the end of our industry on the Clyde and it's like a murderer who wants to murder us we've found out we've defended ourselves against the murderer and people say please negotiate with the murderer, you might stop him from piercing your heart, but he can cut off your legs and arms and there's a sensible compromise and when you're lying bleeding they will tell you in a year or two, wi you minus the legs. Why aren't you standing on your own two feet?"

Jimmy goes on to speak of closing ranks, and tell them they are not on, they were butchers eight weeks ago, they are butchery today and we are having no truck with butchers. This meeting effectively gave back control to the Leadership. As Dr Chik Collins, academic writer, commented this was critical as the workforce showed that they were not going to cooperate on anything less than the four yards and all the labour force.

The work-in continued with discussions and negotiations of all interested parties and ended with the John Brown workers unanimously

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## Jimmy Cloughley, one of the veterans of the Upper Clyde Shipyard work-in of 40 years ago, reflects on that time and what legacy it has bestowed on UK politics

accepting the deal from Marathon, an American oil rig company. The Government had U-turned on its policy of no state intervention. £90million was injected in UCS and the Heath government lost the next election. The shipyards were later nationalised by the 1974 Labour Government.

Events since that period show that 'Selsdon Man' did not disappear and indeed have revisited us today with a vengeance. We must look the journey the mass party of the people has pursued since then and before, starting with the defeat of the Labour Party in the 1959 election and the internecine fights within the party on Clause IV and its abandonment, other policies which finally ended up with the defeat of New Labour at the last election.

Events during the years of Tory rule and the ineffectiveness of the trade unions hampered by increasing state control, sequestration orders, secondary picketing restraints and many other laws

introduced by the Tories and the impact they had on civil liberties resulted in the de-industrialisation of industry and manufacturing.

The abandonment of a left strategy by the Labour Party should be analysed.

Many loyal Labour party members left the Party during the Blair years. They saw the refusal of the government to rescind the anti-trade union laws, proper reform of the House of Lords, tuition fees, making the Labour Party into a party of war following the slavish spectacle of support to George Bush by Tony Blair and his acolytes. (Yes Labour made improvements, but they left themselves open to criticism.)

We have the erosion of democracy in the Trade Unions. Appointing officials instead of electing, leading to the undermining of any fresh, new, dynamic blood coming through with people being in politics and the trade unions as a career and not as a civic responsibility. How have we arrived at the current

situation? There are undemocratic forces working to deny the British people a fair and decent society.

During the UCS campaign those involved thought only of saving their industry and communities. All other thoughts were secondary to this. It was your duty, moral responsibility to fight, regardless of the personal consequences, or career prospects.

The UCS Work-in caused reverberations not only in Britain but worldwide. It was and remains an example and inspiration to workers that organised, united and with public support they can defeat big business, aided by corrupt politicians, ruthless pursuit of profit without any consideration of the human consequences. ■

*Jimmy Cloughley was a steward at UCS during the Work-in and is now an activist in Clydeside Action Against Asbestos.*

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# web review

Henry McCubbin

What ever happened to workers' control?

"We are not going to strike...We are taking over the yards because we refuse to accept that faceless men can make these decisions. We are not strikers. We are responsible people and we will conduct ourselves with dignity and discipline"  
- Jimmy Reid, chair of the joint co-ordinating committee for UCS, June 1971.

Prior to the UCS work-in, in 1968, a small group of academics and activists had formed the Institute for Workers Control. It had support from the TGWU from Jack Jones and from the AEU under Hugh Scanlon.

There was little doubt that the reports and articles of the IWC influenced the thinking of many active trade unionists at this time. Internationally we had the practical example of the Mondragon cooperatives in the Basque country and more generally the introduction in to the political sphere through the European Commission's Draft Fifth Company Law Directive which sought to harmonise worker participation in management of companies across Europe. A Committee of Enquiry into Industrial Democracy was set up by the Labour government of Harold Wilson in December 1975. Its

terms of reference started with the words:

"Accepting the need for a radical extension of industrial democracy in the control of companies by means of representation on boards of directors, and accepting the essential role of trade union organisations in this process to consider how such an extension can best be achieved ..."

This became known as the Bullock report. Its publication in minority and majority forms followed the alignments of the committee members. But the difficulty really came from within the left itself in Britain which, like the Scottish Presbyterian churches, has the capacity to fractionate into sects relating to each of their understanding of the purity of their ideas related to their view of some ancient catechism.

In 1990 as a member of the European Parliament's Social Affairs committee I was reporting on behalf of Labour's members of the European Parliament to the TUC's General Council on the progress of the Draft Fifth Company Law Directive in Parliament. Chairing the meeting was Ken Gill (need I say anymore). I was accused of revisionism by taking the movement 'back to Bullock'. This I must remind readers was at the climax of ten years of the Thatcher Prime Ministership.

The top of the Labour Party under Kinnock was equally opposed but for reasons of sucking up to the rich and powerful.

Spool forward to 1997 and a meeting held by British Ambassador Stephen Wall for members of the CBI in Brussels to inform them of the policies of the New Labour. His first words after his welcome were "well its business as usual" and then he went on to explain that the new government would continue to block "works councils".

I have always believed that the road to socialism is not be found by shouting your desired ends but by reassuring citizens that your means of achieving those ends is viable and does no harm to their well being. That is truly a task for The Jimmy Reid Foundation and fulfilling it would explain to some critics the reasons that there has not been a mass shift to the left is part due to our failure to reassure as well as proselytise. ■

[www.spokesmanbooks.com/workers%20control%20review.htm](http://www.spokesmanbooks.com/workers%20control%20review.htm)

[www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=15954](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=15954)

[www.wcml.org.uk/timeline/1971--upper-clyde-shipbuilders/](http://www.wcml.org.uk/timeline/1971--upper-clyde-shipbuilders/)

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers\\_control](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers_control)



**We need to change the political mood in Scotland. There is already a lot of activity going on in individual unions and in the STUC with another monster demonstration promised for October 1st in support of the STUC's better way. The People's Charter for Scotland is committed to playing its part in raising the political temperature. It is perfectly designed for this job because the six demands of the**

**Charter - A fair economy for a fairer Britain. More and better jobs. Decent homes for all. Protect and improve our public services – no cuts, Fairness and Justice. Build a secure and sustainable future for all - offer the basis of defence as well as providing a platform for building a better future. It is capable of being broadened in terms of content as well as political appeal to embrace a wide cross section of the Scottish population.**

And what gives it particular edge here is the fact that it is a petition and it can therefore be used to engage with people to alert them to the unfairness of the austerity package we face, as well as inspire them with an alternative. It is with this dual purpose in mind that the Peoples Charter in Scotland is about to be lodged as a formal petition to the Scottish Parliament's Petitions Committee. This will begin with a launch at the Scottish Parliament to coincide with the Peoples Charter going live as a Scottish Parliament e-petition. For period of around six weeks, Scots will able to register on-line their support for the Charter's positive vision of public prosperity based on equality and increased social ownership and their opposition to the wars and austerity.

Details of the launch will be announced at [peoplescharterscotland.blogspot.com](http://peoplescharterscotland.blogspot.com)

**You can help change the political mood music in Scotland. Make the e-petition a success and build support for the alternative.**

# Kick Up The Tabloids

## SHOWTUNE MENTAL HEALTH FEARS

I am aware that every time I have written this column in 2011, three stories have tended to dominate, coming up month after month. The same three stories which are routinely described in the tabloids as "Scotland's Shame".

These are, in no particular order, The Lockerbie Bomber, The Edinburgh Trams and Sectarian Violence. Each have grabbed the headlines on a near monthly basis from January through to September.

The saga of the Trams and the plight of al-Megrahi appear to reaching their respective conclusions, with al-Megrahi reportedly on his deathbed and the Trams allegedly now destined for St Andrew's Square. However, I don't think anyone in their right mind will bet on which event will happen first.

Meanwhile, unlike the trams, the whole issue of Sectarianism just rumbles on and on, with an ever-increasing head of steam. In the opinion of Paul McBride QC, sectarianism would be much worse were Scotland to become independent. This is one of the most ridiculous comments on the subject I have heard in years, if only for the reason that it is well-nigh impossible for sectarianism in Scotland to get any worse.

Were this to be in any doubt, it was confirmed by the jaw-droppingly perverse verdict reached in the case against Hearts fan John Wilson, who was accused of assaulting Neil Lennon. To recap, this is a man who was filmed live on television assaulting the Celtic manager, footage which has been repeated ad-nauseum on TV between April and now. This is a man who was heard by a steward of the club he supports shouting at Lennon and calling him a "fenian bastard". This is a man who pleaded guilty to assault. Yet a jury still found the case Not Proven. How could that become any worse under

independence?

One can only assume that the authorities took Wilson's right to "Trial by a Jury of his Peers" a little too literally, and that the bench was made up of Hearts casuals, travelling Rangers fans and members of the Loyal Orange Order.

It is absolutely intolerable that Neil Lennon should be subjected to such personal attacks while doing his job, merely because he is a Roman Catholic. We are constantly being told that football is now part of the entertainment industry. In no other branch of the entertainment business would it be seen as acceptable for someone to be violently attacked because of their faith. It would be utterly wrong if Daniel O'Donnell were to be assaulted onstage because he is a Roman Catholic. Daniel O'Donnell should be assaulted onstage because of what he does onstage, and for no other reason.

This all comes in the wake of the letter-bombing campaign waged against both Lennon and McBride, as well as against ex-MSP Trish Godman. When parcel bombs are sent to the manager of an SPL club, a prominent QC and a former Member of the Scottish Parliament, one must question the intelligence of the person sending such devices through the post. Indeed, what is the point in sending parcel bombs to people who do not open their own mail?

The Scottish Government has, in the meantime, shelved its new set of laws which were intended to tackle the issue of provoking sectarian violence. These measures were well-intentioned in principle, but were fuzzy on detail. The original proposal was for a maximum five-year jail sentence for inciting religious violence. One cannot argue with the wisdom of that. However, when

Roseanna Cunningham was questioned by Parliament on what constituted such a crime, she appeared slightly indecisive. "Under certain circumstances" she said, apparently off the top of her head "a Celtic fan making the sign of the cross could be seen to be provocative." Who is provoked by someone else making the sign of the cross? Two distinct groups, Protestant Bigots and Vampires.

It is just as well this legislation was not in place a year ago. Last September, the Pope was driving down Princes Street, and through Bellahouston Park, making the sign of the cross to an audience of thousands. He could have potentially been looking at a five-year stretch in Saughton or Barlinnie. And, given the behaviour of some of his colleagues, probably in the 'Beast Wing'.

"Under certain circumstances," Ms Cunningham continued to improvise, "a Celtic fan singing You'll Never Walk Alone" could be provocative. This was where the Government's strategy was seen to be in tatters. You'll Never Walk Alone was originally a song from the West-End musical "Carousel". If we are to start handing out custodial sentences for singing songs from the shows, where is that going to lead us all? Scotland's jails are over-crowded enough as it is, without the addition of thousands of members of amateur dramatic societies.

Anyone who has seen an amateur operatic production will know that these people should not be incarcerated in Shotts, Polmont or Peterhead. They belong in Carstairs. ■

*Vladimir McTavish is appearing at comedy venues throughout the UK this autumn. Check [www.vladimirmctavish.com](http://www.vladimirmctavish.com) for more details.*

**Rt Hon TONY BENN**  
+ Community, Equality, Faith &  
Trade Union speakers

# OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup> PEOPLE FIRST

**MARCH & RALLY**  
**GLASGOW GREEN**  
**11.30 MOVE OFF 12 NOON**  
**TO KELVINGROVE PARK**  
**RALLY 1.30 TILL 3PM**

**There is a Better Way**

Transport, access arrangements and further details [www.peoplefirstoctoberfirst.org](http://www.peoplefirstoctoberfirst.org)

## SCOTTISH UNIONS

ACCORD  
Associated Society of Locomotive  
Engineers and Firemen  
Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union  
British Air Line Pilots Association  
British Dietetic Association  
British & Irish Orthoptic Society  
Broadcasting, Entertainment,  
Cinematograph and Theatre Union  
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy  
Communication Workers Union  
COMMUNITY  
Educational Institute of Scotland  
EQUITY  
FDA  
Fire Brigades Union  
GMB  
Musicians' Union  
National Association of Schoolmasters  
Union of Women Teachers  
National Union of Journalists  
National Union of Mineworkers  
National Union of Rail, Maritime and  
Transport Workers  
Nautilus International  
Prison Officers Association (Scotland)  
Prospect  
Public and Commercial Services Union  
Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association  
Scottish Society of Playwrights  
Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists  
Society of Radiographers  
Transport Salaried Staffs' Association  
Union of Construction, Allied Trades and  
Technicians  
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied  
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UNISON  
Unite the Union  
United Road Transport Union  
University & Colleges Union

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STRONGER  
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WAGE JOBS**

**There is a Better Way**

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## Fire Brigades Union Scotland

THE FBU NOTES THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UCS WORK-IN AND THE FACT THAT TODAY WE FACE MANY SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES AS WE FIGHT TO DEFEND SOME OF THE VERY BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SOCIETY INCLUDING ACCESS TO DECENT JOBS WITH DECENT PAY AND THE PROTECTION OF OUR WEAKEST AND MOST VULNERABLE. FIREFIGHTERS ARE ONLY TOO AWARE OF THE LINK BETWEEN POVERTY AND THE LACK OF OPPORTUNITY THAT LEADS TO DESPERATION. ALL TOO OFTEN IT IS OUR MEMBERS WHO ARE PICKING UP THE BROKEN PIECES OF SOMEONE'S LIFE.

WITHIN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE WE ARE FIGHTING TO PROTECT JOBS, PENSIONS AND THE SERVICE WE PROVIDE. OFTEN THAT SERVICE IS MOST NEEDED BY THOSE WHO ARE THE MOST DESPERATE. THE FBU WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A FAIRER AND MORE EQUITABLE SOCIETY. ONCE AGAIN HOWEVER WE FIND OURSELVES UNDER IDEOLOGICAL ATTACK BY A LONDON GOVERNMENT WITH NO SCOTTISH MANDATE. WE FACE A SITUATION WHERE ORDINARY WORKING MEN AND WOMAN ARE BEING FORCED TO PAY FOR THE MISDEEDS OF BANKS AND CORPORATION, WHO HAVE SPEND YEARS FEEDING THEIR OWN GREED.

WE WELCOME THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JIMMY REID FOUNDATION AND WISH IT WELL. SCOTLAND NEEDS TO CONSIDER ITS FUTURE, IT NEEDS A VISION AND IT NEEDS THE COMMITMENT OF THOSE WHO CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

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