



The Making of a Nation: A United, Independent Working Class

No! to tribal division and external domination

Scotland is famous for its major contribution to the Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason, in the 18th century. As with all successful human endeavour it was a collective effort. Alongside leading Scots Enlightenment thinkers David Hume and Adam Smith were the Englishmen John Locke and Isaac Newton.

Central to Enlightenment thought was the use and celebration of reason, the power by which humans understand the universe and improve their own condition. The goals of rational humanity were considered to be knowledge, freedom, and happiness. The early 18th century was also a time of unity, with backward tribal thinking kicked into touch through the joining of Scotland, England and Wales to create the Kingdom of Britain.

Is Scotland still a leader in enlightened, rational thinking based on reason or is it in danger of sinking back into the dark ages of myth and fantasy with calls for internal disunity and voluntary subjugation to a foreign power?

So, in the light of the above, how would you respond to the following?

1. In whose class interests do Holyrood, Westminster and the EU govern?
2. How can working people across Britain defend and improve their quality of life against attacks from global employers?
3. Do you see your interests aligning better with global capitalist interests in Scotland or with the interests of working people across Britain?
4. Why does the EU divide countries into regions (Scotland is a region, according to the EU) and work against national governments?
5. Why do employers support the EU “four freedoms” (labour, goods, capital, services)?
6. Do you see your interests aligning more with employers and their organisations (such as the EU) or with British working people and their organisations (such as the trade unions)?
7. Why did the majority of British working people – except in Scotland and London – vote to leave the EU?
8. Would the EU value Scottish working people’s interests over the interests of global employers?
9. Would you trust Holyrood to take care of working people’s interests if it rejoined the EU?

What does “Scottish” mean to Holyrood, Westminster and the EU?

- The Caley railway engineering works in Glasgow was closed recently, ending 150 years of a rail industry (see photo, below). EU state aid rules were cited by Holyrood as a reason for turning down assistance to the site. Mick Hogg of the RMT union called it “industrial vandalism”.
- The Private Finance Initiative deal with Lloyds Banking Group resulted in a final Holyrood bill of £90 million – double the original figure – to buy out the “super ferry” that serves the essential Ullapool to Stornoway sea route.
- After failing to support, and then taking over, Ferguson Shipbuilders in Port Glasgow, Holyrood still failed to commission new vessels needed for the shipping lanes around the Western Isles.
- At BiFab offshore windfarm Neart na Goaithe, off the Fife coast, more than 500 highly skilled jobs are threatened. EU rules against state aid mean that new orders through “public procurement” have been turned down. French company EDF owns the site and has placed orders for production of the offshore windfarm with the Italian company Saipem. The products will be made at its yards in Indonesia where wages and safety standards are much lower. Another five platforms for the windfarm went to Navantia, the Spanish state shipbuilding company. Contracts worth over £2 billion have gone to Belgian steel constructors Smulders and United Arab Emirates fabricators Lamprelli to produce 100 turbine jackets.
- At British Steel, more than 5,000 jobs are threatened, including those at Roslin in Midlothian, because the British Government slavishly followed EU rules.



- Then there are the jobs at Rosyth and Clyde shipyards, in jeopardy because the construction of Navy support ships has been forced to go to international tender – again under EU rules. The ships were deemed to be non-military, thereby excluding them from having to be built in Britain.
- The Scottish Salmon Company, previously controlled by a Ukrainian finance company, and recently bought by Danish billionaires, is supported by Holyrood in its plan for a huge salmon factory farm off the Isle of Arran coastline. It would dump faecal waste in the sea equivalent to a town of 66,000 people, use acoustic deterrents to ward off seals, also scaring porpoises and dolphins, and damaging the area’s much-admired landscape.
- Far from criticising all this, the Scottish Trades Union Congress continues its slavish support for the EU and goes along with Holyrood’s quest for yet another divisive referendum on breaking up the UK, a move that would destroy our unity and our ability to resist EU and global capitalism.

What are your thoughts on these key issues?

- Scotland trades more with the rest of the UK than with the rest of the world combined. This Home Market makes up 60 per cent of total trade – a massive £48.9 billion. A hard border with England would mean trade barriers with England. The EU accounts for only 18 per cent of our total exports, standing at £14.9 billion and our trade with the rest of the world is 22 per cent, totalling £17.6 billion.
- According to the latest Scottish Government figures, Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland (GERS), Scotland generates 8 per cent of the UK’s taxes but gets 9.3 per cent of the UK’s public spending. A net gain.
- The latest figures from GERS show that public spending in Scotland was £75.3 billion, but revenues raised in Scotland totalled only £62.7 billion. Scotland’s deficit was therefore £12.6 billion, or 7 per cent of GDP, compared with just 1.1 per cent across the UK.
- Holyrood has failed in its “day job”. The latest Programme for International Student Assessment report shows Scotland lagging behind England in Maths, Reading and Science. Police and other services are underfunded, and only public pressure and campaigning saved British Transport Police from break-up. And in the past year, the increasing shortcomings in hospitals and social care are evidence of Holyrood’s mismanagement.
- Scotland remaining in the UK will help protect jobs. As many as 545,000 jobs in Scotland are supported by the rest of the UK (Fraser of Allander Report, 2017).

The simple choice

The failed globalist outlook uses separatism to advocate petty regional “planning” under the thumb of multinationals so that workers are broken up into harmless regional tribes squabbling with each other. Meanwhile, global employers – Scottish, English, Spanish, Ukrainian, it doesn’t matter where they’re from – are laughing all the way to the bank.

The financial crisis was never solved in the realm of the euro and we’re glad to be getting away from it. Yet the SNP would have us adopt such a failed currency! Just look at how it crushed Greece and Portugal.

Where do you fit into this? If there is a second referendum about the future of Britain, will you vote for global capitalism, or for independence through the unity of the British working class? It’s a simple choice. Separatism, federalism and regionalism all seek to break up Britain in one way or another. None of these has a place in the British working class democratic approach.

Now the EU rug has been pulled from under the SNP’s feet, it is starting to panic. A symptom is its routine exaggeration of numbers, for example saying 80,000 had attended their January 2020 Glasgow rally, with only just over 10,000 being counted on video evidence.

Unity is not easily won, nor is securing a newly won British independence. You can help by coming to our public meetings and subscribing to our journal *Workers*. Read in-depth analysis of events unfolding in Britain and the world on our website, cpbml.org.uk – where you can also sign up for our free electronic newsletter.

CPBML May Day meeting



Photo Workers

Glasgow

Friday 1 May, 7 pm

“2020 Vision: An independent Britain”

Renfield Centre, 260 Bath Street, G2 4JP

With Britain’s formal departure from the EU, it’s time for a united British working class to take control of our country’s future. Come and discuss. All welcome. Free entry.